

EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

Thesis/Project

LET THE BLESSING OF YOUR CUP OVERFLOW:  
BUILDING COMMUNITY AMONG ASIAN-LANGUAGE CONGREGATIONS  
AND WHITE CONGREGATIONS  
IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE UNITED STATES

BY

ADA YUK-YING WONG NAGATA

M.Div., Claremont School of Theology, 2007

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

2015

© Copyright by  
ADA YUK-YING WONG NAGATA  
2015

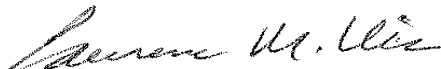
Approved By



Supervisor

---

Dr. Kwok Pui Lan  
William F. Cole Professor of Christian Theology and Spirituality



Reader

---

Dr. Lawrence Wills  
Ethelbert Talbot Professor of Biblical Studies

**Let the Blessing of Your Cup Overflow:**  
**Building Community among Asian-language Congregations**  
**and White Congregations in the Episcopal Church of the United States**

Ada Yuk-ying Wong Nagata

**Abstract**

This thesis focuses on the building of community between Asian-language congregations and predominantly White congregations in the Episcopal Church in the United States, and offers models of cross-cultural dialogue in order to enhance mutual understanding. I have observed through my ministry and connection with the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry that White and Asian-language congregations are segregated even when they share the same church buildings. I argue that God has created us with abundant goodness in our being. Fear, Eurocentrism, oppression and internalized oppression, and misunderstanding, however, prevent people from seeing the goodness in each other or in themselves. This causes people to reject and exclude each other. This thesis describes the history of migration in the United States to remind us that this country is a nation of immigrants with racial diversity from the beginning, and it is religion that has helped many Asian migrants settle in this country. By using two case studies of Asian congregations in White Episcopal churches, I explore the issues these congregations face. I then offer ways that are helpful in facilitating the integration and reconciliation of Asian congregations in White Episcopal churches. I use an example of a newly established Chinese Center to demonstrate that to have intentional intercultural

ministry, gifts have to be offered at all levels: the congregation level, the diocesan level, and the national level. And by applying the Asset Based Community Development model, we are able to focus not on our half-emptiness but rather our half-fullness to transform intercultural ministry into complete overflowing fullness.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b> .....	vii
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	x
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 1    To the Land of Freedom and Blessings</b> .....	7
Migration – Wanting a Better Life .....	8
The United States as a Nation of Immigrants .....	9
Asian Immigrants in the United States .....	11
Christian Perspectives of Immigration .....	17
The Role of Religion in Migrants’ Adaptation .....	22
<b>Chapter 2    Episcopal Asian American Congregations</b> .....	26
History of the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry .....	26
Case Studies of Two Asian Congregations .....	32
<i>Church Number One</i> .....	33
<i>Church Number Two</i> .....	36
Observations and Analyses .....	38
<b>Chapter 3    Issues Facing Episcopal Asian American Congregations</b> .....	45
Identity Formation .....	46
Change of Identity after Immigration .....	49
Lack of Voice .....	55
Internalized Oppression .....	60
Lack of Interaction and Integration .....	64
<b>Chapter 4    Models for Cross-cultural Dialogue and Community Building</b> .....	69
Cross-Cultural Understanding of Emotions .....	69
Radical Welcoming .....	77
Cycle of Gospel Living .....	82
Guidelines for Multicultural Dialogue .....	85
Asset-Based Community Development.....	91
<b>Chapter 5    Conclusion</b> .....	98
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	105

## **Preface**

In a cool October week in 2011, up in Estes Park, Colorado, where the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry (EAM) Strategic Planning Meeting was held, the EAM Missioner the Rev. Dr. Winfred Vergara announced that EAM and Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) would offer a Doctor of Ministry (DMin) Pilot Project with concentration on Asiamerican studies for six Asian clergy in June 2012. It sounded interesting and I thought it would be wonderful for the Asian clergy to study together and form a coalition to enhance EAM. However, being a full-time priest at a church that had just undergone major changes, I did not think it was a good time to enroll in the program. I did not pursue it.

In the following year, Vergara strongly encouraged the Asian clergy to pursue this study. I told him it was not a good time yet. His answer was that being in ministry there was never a good time to pursue advanced degree, I just had to do it. I agreed to try and thought there would be five Asian clergy doing it together. As the time got closer, I realized there would be only two Asians. I was quite nervous about taking the program.

When I started the program I had no idea what project I would pursue. I reflected on my spiritual journey and my ministry while working on finding my social location in the first classes. My White mentor, the Rev. Canon Deborah Dunn, encouraged me to have my own voice, and a Chinese voice surfaced immediately. The unjust treatment of other Asian clergy in the Episcopal Church also came to the forefront. When I did the anti-racism class as required by all the EDS students, as a bicultural person, I felt that

some of the cross-cultural guidelines might not apply to Asians. When I asked the professor if there was something that would apply to Asian community, there was no response. Then I realized it would be up to us Asians to contribute to it. All these eventually became part of my thesis project.

I was nervous about pursuing this advanced degree. I worried about if I had the time to do it, if I could handle the researches, and if I would be able to articulate my ideas. My DMin cohort was a wonderful group. We have built up a close bonding to support and encourage each other. We keep in touch even when we are not in session. After sharing my Water-Buffalo story, which I will tell in Chapter Four, they have decided to call the cohort Water Buffalo. They saw my passion to advocate for the Asians, and they affirm it. Due to unforeseen circumstance, I could not join the Water-Buffalo group in January Term and ended up joining another cohort the next year. I was very blessed to know both groups. The second group is just as supportive. One has become my writing partner to ensure we keep writing, even though we became lax off after a while.

My fear of not having time to write became real after the summer. I finished the first chapter as planned. I thought I could get Chapter Two done by the end of summer before I went on a month-long trip to Asia. But things kept coming up. I got distracted often. Being a nurse for over three decades, I am a doer and not a writer. Writing is not my strength. One of my cohort members and I have been holding each other up to not be “ABD/ABT” (all but dissertation/all but thesis). I knew if I wanted to get the thesis done, I had to be away from most of the distractions. Thanks to my rector and colleagues for



allowing me to take my sabbatical to be at EDS to concentrate on the writing. I know it would be cold and possibly snow; it would be a good condition to work. Little did I know it would be a historic winter. As of the time I am writing, it has broken the record of more than 108 inches of snow in Boston area since the end of January in 2015. I think God make sure to keep me inside to get my writing done. This journey has not been an easy one, but it does take determination to achieve the goal. I am grateful to have writing partners to hold each other up.

This thesis project has helped me reflect on my spiritual journey and ministry. It has broadened my vision. I have learned that I have been both a privileged and non-privileged person and have been suffering from internalized oppression, which I was not aware of before. In this thesis, I want to share what I have learned and experienced and what I have come to believe to be helpful in bringing multicultural communities together. I hope to be God's partner in fulfilling God's dream.

## **Acknowledgments**

It takes a village. My thank-you list is going to be long. There are many people who have encouraged me, challenged me, and assisted me in taking this journey.

To begin with, I have to thank Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry (EAM) in partnership with the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) for offering this Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program to enable, empower, and equip the Asian clergy for a more effective leadership ministry. I would also like to thank the officers who initiated this partnership, the Rev. Dr. Winfred Vergara, Missioner of EAM; and Canon Peter Ng, Officer for Anglican Relations and Partnership Officer for Asia and the Pacific of the Episcopal Church. I also thank the Bishop Garver Clergy Award of the Diocese of Los Angeles. EAM, EDS, and the Bishop Garver Clergy Award all partially funded my participation in the program.

I have been blessed to be in two DMin cohorts at EDS. My colleagues have all been supportive, humorous, and have offered positive critiques concerning my thesis project. First, thanks to my Water Buffalo cohort with whom I learned, laughed, and studied; they especially prayed and supported me spiritually and emotionally during my son's sickness: the Most. Rev. Dr. Rosemary Ananis, the Rev. Diane Marie Datz, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Eoyang, Jr. who was the first graduate from this EAM/EDS partnership, the Rev. Nancy Hauser, with whom we upheld each other not to be ABD or ABT, and the Rev. Dr. Moses 'Kunle Sowale. The second cohort accepted me readily when I joined them after their cohort was formed: the Rev. Sara Shisler Goff; Rev. Tania Guzman; and

the Rev. Dr. Lynda Tyson, who was my writing partner, and we encouraged each other to write. I am forever grateful for our friendship and journey together.

I am grateful to the Episcopal Asian congregations who have faithfully served the marginalized and have paved the path for the latecomers. Special thanks go to the two Asian congregations and the clergy that were willing to be interviewed and shared their stories with me.

I am indebted to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Kwok Pui Lan, who has patiently and kindly guided and encouraged me through this project. With her expertise and scholarship, I have learned to think and write more critically, and to be aware of my colonial mindset. She also introduced me to numerous Asian theologians so that I could research and learn from their works. Without Dr. Kwok's conscientious follow up with my tardy work, I would have been ABT. I hope to continue to learn from her after graduation.

I am also thankful to my second reader, Dr. Lawrence Wills, from whom I regretfully did not get to take any classes. He offered a fresh look and objective critique as a White person to my thesis. Thanks also go to Dr. Joan Martin, who is the coordinator of the DMin program, and she helped me finish my self-directed study on immigration.

Many thanks to the EDS community, the deans, the faculty, the librarian, and the staff in providing the companionship, the excellent education, and the friendly environment for higher education. I also owe thanks to Terrilyn Watts, who helped edit my thesis and has been a good companion while I was on the EDS campus.

I am grateful to my former rector, the Very Rev. Dr. Michael Battle, who is now my current Interim Dean of Student Life at EDS for calling me out of my comfort zone as a nurse, to serve as a full-time priest and to start a new Chinese ministry. Thanks also go to my current rector, the Rev. Gary Bradley, who approved my time off to take classes at EDS and to go on sabbatical to finish the thesis project. I am also thankful for the clergy colleagues at Church of Our Saviour, San Gabriel for covering for me while I was on sabbatical; and I am also eternally grateful to the parishioners for understanding my absence, and for the warm welcome they gave me upon my return from sabbatical. I also thank them for all their prayers and encouragement. I have learned to be a better person and pastor from these faithful people.

My heartfelt thanks goes to my White ally, sister, mother, friend, mentor, and priest the Rev. Canon Deborah Dunn. Mother Deborah (our endearing term for her) tirelessly and selflessly raised up our Chinese clergy. I was one of the five Chinese clergy whom she raised up. She encouraged me to have my own voice, a Chinese voice, to speak up and tell the truth. She has made an impact on my ministry and this thesis, and I am forever indebted to her pastoral leadership. My other White mentor to whom I need to give thanks is the Rt. Rev. Diane Jardine Bruce, who vigorously serves and leads the multicultural ministry in the Diocese of Los Angeles, and connects to the Anglican Dioceses in Asia. She truly sets an example for truth-telling with love. They are my two role models. I am also thankful to the Rt. Rev. J. Jon Bruno, our Diocesan Bishop for his leadership in the Diocese of Los Angeles.

Last but not least, I am forever grateful to the support, and understanding of my husband, Ronnie Nagata. Without his blessing and love, I would not have been able to complete this thesis project. I am thankful for my son Jason, who often tells me how proud he is of me; a little encouragement is helpful during times of anxiety and of doubt of not being able to finish.

I thank God for having this wonderful village of people to uphold me on my journey.

## **Introduction**

Because I love the liturgy and theology of the Episcopal Church: its traditions, inclusiveness, advocacy for justice, and both/and thinking; and because I know the hardships that immigrants endure when coming to a new country, when I first became involved in church ministry, I had a dream. At that time there was only one Chinese-language congregation in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, and my dream was to have many Chinese-language congregations to serve the Chinese community in the Episcopal Way. Specifically, I was thinking about Chinese congregations for Chinese people. Around that same time, we got a new diocesan bishop, whose vision was to have ten Chinese congregations in ten years. That was very exciting and encouraging to me; I thought my prayers had been answered. However, God had a different plan for me. Instead of starting these Chinese congregations on our own, God sent me to start Chinese congregations in predominantly White<sup>1</sup> Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Los Angeles, both as a layperson and an ordained priest. I was very disappointed, at first, because I was afraid we would not only not be able to keep our own culture but also might become second-class citizens because the Whites are the dominant group, as they are in the secular world. And this journey has not been easy; in fact, at times it has been intimidating, frustrating, and heart breaking. However, this path I was sent on has become a sacred experience for me because I realize it is not to fulfill my dream but to fulfill God's.

---

<sup>1</sup> I am using "White" generally here. It means dominant English-speaking Euro-Americans and Euro-American culture.

After a while, I became involved in the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry (EAM)<sup>2</sup> in the Episcopal Church and learned about ministries of other Asian congregations throughout the country. Through both my ministries and the EAM, I have observed that most of the predominantly White congregations and Asian language-speaking congregations are segregated. I have witnessed unequal treatment and discrimination against Asian congregations by the White congregations. It did not seem to be too different from the secular world. I have been pondering if this is what a church is called to be?

After witnessing injustice toward the ethnic clergy and laity in the church, the restlessness to speak up for Asians keeps growing in me. But with my cultural baggage even after being empowered by my White mentor to use my own voice, I lacked the courage to speak up openly. Typically, EAM has been the voice for the minority Asian group, but it is not enough. The Rev. Dr. Winfred Vergara, the EAM Missioner, and Canon Peter Ng, Officer for Anglican Relations and Partnership Officer for Asia and the Pacific of the Episcopal Church, believe that the Asian community needs more voices to advocate for this group and to educate the Whites. So they worked to develop with the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) to offer a Doctor of Ministry Program for the Asian Episcopal clergy serving in the United States that will enable, empower, and equip them for a more effective leadership ministry in the twenty-first century. I thought this was an opportunity for me to become better educated, and to develop my theological voice for myself and for others. So I decided to participate in the program.

---

<sup>2</sup> The word “Asiamerica” was coined by the late Rev. Winston Ching to include both American born as well as foreign born persons of Asian ancestry. I will go into detail about this ministry in Chapter Two.

Early in the program, my thought was mainly to become a voice to advocate for the oppressed Asian group. At EDS, all students have to take an anti-racism course as their very first class. This class was an eye-opener for me. I have learned that instead of beating the system and claiming to be the victim, we need to take responsibility to bring about change. In that time, I have learned that I have been both a privileged and non-privileged person and have been suffering from internalized oppression, which I was not aware of before. At the same time, I also noticed that some of the VISIONS guidelines, provided by a consultant agency of the school, do not apply to Asians because they are based on the Western cultures. This adds to what I have learned from Kaleidoscope Institute, an organization that helps churches and schools address race and diversity issues and multicultural ministry.

Shortly after I started the Doctor of Ministry program, I was sent to take a workshop on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). The concept is to look not at a half-empty glass but at a half-full glass. When the half-fullnesses are put together, they will fill the glass so that it will become full. Immediately, Psalm 23 came to mind, “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long” (v. 4-6). This has inspired me not to be afraid because I know God is with me, and to look at the gifts that God has given us to fill God’s cup.

In the anti-racism class, I also learned that blaming and shaming only causes more



separation for it does not move us forward because that only leads us to dwelling in the past bad experiences. This has enlightened me to change my focus not only to be the voice but also to be the change agent. I know that the Asian and White congregations are already segregated; the way to bring change is to have them come together as one body of Jesus Christ. We will still be Asians or Whites, but we are one in Christ. We need to put our half-fullnesses together to carry out what God has called us to do.

I am reminded that though Asian congregations are oppressed, they are also empowered. I have personally experienced empowerment by the Whites and non-Asians. As a matter of fact, it was because of this empowerment that I went through the ordination process and was ordained a priest. It was also because of my former rector's vision that I gave up my thirty-year nursing career to serve in full-time ministry, and because of my current White rector's support I find the courage to speak up, and to help facilitate interactions between the Whites and Asians in the church.

In this thesis project I argue that we have abundant God-given goodness in our being. It may be out of fear, insecurity, hurt, or misunderstanding that we develop a log in our eye, which prevents us from seeing the goodness in others. This causes people to reject and exclude each other. This thesis project focuses on the building of community between predominantly White congregations and Asian-language congregations in the Episcopal Church through the study of history and case studies, to offer some models of cross-cultural dialogue in order to enhance the understanding of and finding the goodness in each other. In Chapter One, I discuss the history of migration in the United States and how religion has helped Asian migrants settle in this country. In Chapter Two, I describe

the history of the formation of the EAM in the United States so as to understand the broader picture of Asian Americans in the Episcopal Church. Then I offer two case studies of Asian congregations that share spaces with dominant White churches in order to explore the issues these congregations face. I offer my observations and analyses at the end. In Chapter Three, I examine some common issues facing the Asian congregations in the White Episcopal churches. These issues are closely related to our doing multicultural ministry in the Episcopal Church. In Chapter Four, I offer ways that are helpful in facilitating the integration and reconciliation of Asian congregations sharing space in the White Episcopal churches. I focus on five areas: cross-cultural understanding of emotions, radical welcoming, the Cycle of Gospel living, guidelines for multicultural dialogue, and Asset-Based Community Development. I conclude the project by offering an example of a newly established Chinese Center based on gifts that are offered at all levels: the congregation level, the diocesan level, and the national Church<sup>3</sup> level.

In this project, I use the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, and I use both VISIONS Inc.'s program of Cross-Cultural Dialogue and some of the Kaleidoscope's Sustainable Missional Ministry model to facilitate cross-cultural understanding and to empower and liberate the church and its leaders to transform fear to joy. I hope this project will help both sides to understand their blessings. Instead of being fearful of their half-emptinesses, I hope they will make use of their half-fullnesses with joy and see that their combined cup actually overflows.

---

<sup>3</sup> The term "national Church" used here refers to the Episcopal Church in the United States.

I do not claim to be expert in multicultural ministry, but I want to share what I have learned and experienced, and what I have come to believe to be helpful in bringing multicultural communities together. I hope to be God's partner in fulfilling God's dream. I write this thesis project drawing from my experience of many years of ministry and from my learning along the way.

## Chapter 1

### To the Land of Freedom and Blessings

*Today's Episcopal Church actively seeks to minister to the rapidly growing number of immigrants to the United States in ways respectful of their culture. The church not only warmly invites these newcomers to join the faith community, but also addresses immigrants' physical, social, and emotional needs, and often serves as a community advocate for the rights of immigrants.*

- David Danner<sup>1</sup>

As written by David Danner, the Episcopal Church has been more welcoming to immigrants into the church lately. The once predominantly White Episcopal Church has been diversified with the inclusion of many ethnic groups. With their different cultures, backgrounds, and languages, there is a great need to build community between them. In order to build community between these different groups, one of the most important things is for them to know each other. And in order to do this, they must know each other's history. This chapter first provides a brief historical survey of the migration of Asians to the United States and the reasons for these various waves of migration. One goal of this chapter is to serve as a reminder that this country is a country established by immigrants, and not only those from Europe but also those from all parts of the world. It will also look at the hardships that the immigrants face then and now. There are many experts and policy makers who look at immigration from political, social, and economic perspectives. However, I argue in this chapter that there is one often-neglected aspect

---

<sup>1</sup> David L. Danner, "Immigration and the Episcopal Church: An Ever-Changing Face," *Anglican Theological Review* 95, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 649.

about the immigration issue, and that is the religious aspect. The latter part of the chapter describes how religion can help migrants settle in this country and how it plays a role in immigrants' life.

### **Migration – Wanting a Better Life**

Migration is the act of moving from one country or place or locality to another. It is nothing new and is ongoing. Why do people move? I believe if people have what they need and are comfortable in one place, it is not likely they will want to leave their comfort zone and move to a different country. Most of the time people move because they want to. They move to seek opportunities, to look for food, to look for physical or political shelter. I think that is understandable. However, there are forced migrations that are imposed against people's will, such as with slaves and refugees.

When people move, they often want to seek better opportunities; however, they also must leave behind what they are used to, sometimes even their loved ones. They have to face things that are different; they have to face uncertainty and possible hostility. In their new environment, they need to learn new things. Sometimes they accept the new things, but they also resist new things, and they have to choose what things to accept and what things to keep.

As a result of migration, people with different cultures, languages, and skin colors encounter each other. When people face others who are different from them, they can experience anxiety, tension, and conflicts arising from these differences. There have also been different attitudes towards immigrants. Some people are against immigrants, while

others see the merits and contributions of immigrants to a country. As I am writing this thesis in late 2014, the immigration issue has become a controversial political topic in the United States. Since this issue cannot be avoided, I believe it is better to face it constructively, to help and learn from each other rather than to avoid the issue or, out of fear, prevent migration from happening, with costly results such as the loss of human lives at the border. With these concerns in mind, I am going to look briefly at the migration history of the United States.

### **The United States as a Nation of Immigrants**

The United States Department of State offers a publication called *Outline of U.S. History*.<sup>2</sup> This publication gives a detailed chronology of the first Americans who moved to North America some 30,000 to 34,000 years ago to those immigrants arriving in the United States today.

The *Outline of U.S. History* says the first people who migrated from Asia to North America followed the wild birds and animals across a land bridge between these two continents, which once was dry land. These were the Native Americans, who were the first to inhabit North America. They migrated to look for food to survive.

Sucheng Chan reports that between 1850 and 1930 approximately 35 million Europeans migrated to the United States.<sup>3</sup> Many people may think that North Americans

---

<sup>2</sup> This offers a chronology of the arrival of different groups to the United States. This fully illustrated edition has been completely revised and updated by Alonzo L. Hamby, Distinguished Professor of History at Ohio University, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2011/04/20110428150452su0.6368306.html#ixzz2tbLli6Fy>.

<sup>3</sup> Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 3.

are of European ancestry; they are considered White people. But Ronald Takaki, a professor in the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley, argues otherwise. He relates that in 1607 the English colonizers founded a settlement in Jamestown, Virginia. Soon afterward, twenty Africans were brought there in 1619, a year before the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth Rock in 1620.<sup>4</sup> He maintains that many people migrated to the United States from “different shores.” They were not only from Europe but also from Africa and Asia. Chan says almost a million people from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and India migrated to the United States during 1850-1930.<sup>5</sup> Takaki states that America has been racially diverse from the beginning of her history, and this diversity has become more evident: “Currently, one-third of the American people do not trace their origins to Europe; in California, minorities are fast becoming a majority.”<sup>6</sup> He reports that *Time* predicts, “By 2056, most Americans will trace their descent to Africa, Asia, the Hispanic world, the Pacific Islands, Arabia – almost anywhere but white Europe.”<sup>7</sup> The United States is indeed a nation of immigrants with racial diversity. Many people migrated to the United States for religious and political freedom, and economic and other opportunities. As a result, they also helped to build this country. I am going to focus on one particular group of the United States immigrants, the Asians. I will describe their history of migration, their contributions to society, the treatment they received, and their responses to this treatment.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1993), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Chan, *Asian Americans*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## Asian Immigrants in the United States

“No history, no community, no self;  
Know history, know community, know self.”

- Filipino-American Youth Coalition<sup>8</sup>

In his book, *Mainstreaming: Asian Americans in the Episcopal Church*, Winfred Vergara writes on the history of Asians in America. I will summarize the beginning of Asians' immigration to America based on Vergara's work.<sup>9</sup>

The first major wave of Asian immigrants was comprised of Chinese migrants. Many Chinese heard the news of the California Gold Rush and ventured to California for gold. First a few hundred came. Within the next two years, a few thousand crossed the ocean to arrive in California. In another year, the number of people who came increased tenfold. This increase of people was due to the recruitment of American contractors for cheap labor to carry out dangerous work like dynamite blasting. Some of these immigrants lost their limbs and some even their lives with this dangerous work. Later on, when the gold fever calmed down, the Chinese were transferred to other projects, such as building the transcontinental railroad. These Chinese contributed greatly to the building of this transcontinental railroad, connecting the Pacific coast at San Francisco Bay with the existing East Coast railroad network. They also contributed to agriculture, manufacturing, and food industries.

---

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Fred (Winfred) Vergara, *Mainstreaming: Asian Americans in the Episcopal Church* (New York: The Office of Asian American Ministries, The Episcopal Center, New York, 2005), 25.

<sup>9</sup> Vergara, *Mainstreaming*, 31-44.



In the beginning when there was the need for labor, the Chinese immigrants were warmly welcomed and government officials openly considered them as equals to the Whites. Nevertheless, with the increase of Chinese immigrants and the decrease of gold mining, Americans started to resent this influx due to the fear that their jobs would be taken away by these low-paying laborers. Anti-immigrant sentiments arose and, as Vergara said, “hospitality turned to hostility.”<sup>10</sup> Laws were passed that banned mostly Chinese and Japanese laborers. And, eventually, in 1882 the federal government approved the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years and also prohibited Chinese naturalization. It was not repealed until 1943. It was repealed largely due to the United States government’s need to establish trust and alliance with the Chinese during World War II when the United States was fighting against the Japanese Empire.

After the first wave of Chinese migration to the United States, came the Japanese wave. First, they mainly migrated to Hawaii to work in the sugar and pineapple plantations between the years of 1885 to 1924. They came because of the heavy taxation imposed on them by the Emperor of Japan in order to support his programs of industrialization and militarization. The farmers bore this heavy burden and lost their lands. They migrated to find a better economic situation. They were hard-working people and some were even able to start their own small businesses. Later they moved to different states and became naturalized citizens. When the economy was flourishing, and these migrants were needed to provide labor and to run small businesses, they were

---

<sup>10</sup> Vergara, *Mainstreaming*, 32.

treated with dignity. However, the Japanese also encountered various forms of racism, especially when there was fear that the migrants were taking away the benefits of the White Americans. White Americans also feared mixing with people of color. The worst consequence of racism came after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, and the United States declared war on Japan. While fighting against Japan, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Executive Order 9066, relocating some 11,000 people of Japanese ancestry to remote, uninhabited areas, even though two-thirds of these people were already naturalized American citizens. These people lost their homes, their businesses, and they had to endure harsh living conditions in the confinement camps.

The Koreans came because of hardships they suffered under Japanese colonization. After China was defeated by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), Japan invaded Korea in 1905 and colonized the country. The Japanese were harsh on the Koreans. They destroyed Korean culture and took away their land. The Koreans started to migrate to Hawaii to work in the plantations to escape the harsh treatment of the Japanese in their home country. The White Hawaiian planters welcomed the Koreans in an effort to counter the discontent the Japanese workers felt concerning their mistreatment. The next wave of Korean migration to the United States came in the aftermath of the Korean War when Korea was divided into the north and the south. North Korea became Communist and the south was placed under the protection of the United States. Many Korean women came to the United States as war brides, and Korean orphans from World War II and the Korean War came as adopted children. Korean professionals, business

people, and students came afterward. Koreans also experienced racial discrimination in jobs and housing by White Americans who sought to preserve America for Whites.

Another group of immigrants, Filipinos, are believed to have been in New Orleans as early as in 1573, but their significant migration did not occur until the turn of the twentieth century. The Philippines were first colonized by the Spanish, and then by the United States. It was due to American colonization that they came. The first migrants came as farmers and students, then as war brides and World War II veterans and professionals.

There were other migrants from other Asian countries, as well. Asian Indians came mostly to gain an education at United States colleges and universities, and many immigrated to the country as professionals. However, most of the Vietnamese, Laotians, Cambodians, and Hmong immigrants came as refugees. As refugees, these South East Asians fled to escape war, political persecution, and violence.

We can see from the history of the immigration of Asians into the United States that people moved to the land for various reasons. Immigrants coming to the United States wanted to escape poverty, persecution, oppression, and to seek better lives and opportunities, so, in a way, they came because they wanted to. Other groups, however, came unwillingly, and these were the refugees and asylum-seekers who came because this was one of the few safe places they could find.

The Declaration of Independence of the United States says: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of

Happiness.”<sup>11</sup> However, the migration history of Asians to North America has not shown that Americans see all men as being created equal, or that they are all endowed with unalienable rights to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, as stated in the Declaration of Independence. Once the Europeans settled in the land, many forgot both the hardships they faced and the assistance they received from the Native Americans. Instead, they dominated and oppressed the Native American communities, and took over their lands. They forgot about the Founding Fathers’ words in the Declaration of Independence: that people are created equal, that these people are endowed with rights to have life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. After taking over their land, the White Americans wanted to maintain their European culture and suppressed others who came. We can see this from the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the internment of the Japanese during World War II from 1942 to 1945, and other instances of discrimination against new immigrants.

How did Asians respond during the discriminating and oppressive times? During these times, most Asian Americans worked hard, remained quiet, and raised few complaints. Because of their hard work, their tolerance of oppression, and the younger generation’s high level of academic achievement, Asian immigrants were praised and labeled as the “model minority” in the 1980’s. Takaki refutes the claim that politicians and commentators misled the public about Asian Americans’ financial success. He says the reported higher annual income of Asian Americans compared to the Whites was due to the fact that the Asians they studied resided in regions with higher incomes than the

---

<sup>11</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, “Declaration of Independence,” [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html).

national average, and that there were more members working in Asian families than White families, approximately 2 per Asian family to 1.6 per White family.<sup>12</sup>

Biblical scholar Gale A. Yee says that Asian Americans are considered the model minority because they are seen as having assimilated well into American society, having become financially successful, and having attained the American Dream. She says the Chinese are stereotyped as having traditional values and attributes. They respect their elders, have strong family ties, work hard, are smart, have higher educations, and are high achievers. Nevertheless, she argues that this stereotype is not a compliment to the Chinese but is, rather, intended to denigrate the other racial groups and to disparage those Asians who have not made it. Thus, Whites are using this stereotype to pit the Blacks or other minorities against the Chinese, telling the Blacks, Native Americans, or Latinos not to whine but to work harder, and thereby taking attention away from this systematic discrimination.<sup>13</sup> In my opinion, that is typical “divide and conquer” strategy.

The restriction on immigration was modified after the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. This Act abolished the national origins quota system that was part of the American immigration policy since the 1920s, replacing it with a preference system that focused on immigrants’ skills and family relationships with citizens or United States residents. It reopened the doors to Asian immigrants.

The United States has been a preferred country for those seeking immigration. When the economy was good and when the need for cheap labor was high, migrant

---

<sup>12</sup> Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 475.

<sup>13</sup> Gale A. Yee, ““She Stood in Tears amid the Alien Corn’: Ruth, the Perpetual Foreigner and Model Minority,” in *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women’s Religion and Theology*, ed. Rita Nakashima Brock, Jung Ha Kim, Kwok Pui-lan, and Seung Ai Yang (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 50.

workers and professionals were all welcome. Whenever there was an economic downturn, like we recently experienced in 2008, anti-migrant sentiment returned. As of right now, immigration is once again one of the most controversial topics in the country. There is pressure to restrict the entry of the immigrants, and much money has been spent heavily on the reinforcement of border security. However, even with the militarized control of United States and Mexican borders and the limits set on immigration to this country, there are few signs of decreased migration. People enter in many different ways, with or without documents. As a matter of fact, the militarized border control has created several unintended consequences. Since it has become more dangerous and more expensive to cross the border, unauthorized migrants stay in the United States longer, and their spouses and children, who have been left in the home countries, try to cross the border to reunite with their families in the United States. Even though migrants from Latin America mainly attempt border crossing, some Asians do come to the United States via this route. Most Asians, however, come with documents as professionals, students, investors, and tourists, but when the documents expire and cannot be renewed, they stay in the country as undocumented aliens. But whether the immigrants are documented or not, we have seen how the White population treat these immigrants over time. I will turn to Christian perspectives of immigration.

### **Christian Perspectives of Immigration**

Christian scholars have diverse perspectives on immigration, and I will analyze two different views. James Edwards, a biblical scholar at Whitworth University, a

Presbyterian minister, and a fellow with the Center of Immigration Studies, coauthored *Congressional Politics of Immigration Reform*. He offers a biblical perspective on immigration policy. Edwards states that the Bible is more focused on the treatment of strangers, sojourners, or foreigners among us than on the policy for immigration. He cites several scriptural passages supporting his argument for non-oppressive and moral treatment of foreigners. One of the scripture passages is from Leviticus, “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (19:33-34).

It might appear from his quoting of this passage that Edwards is hospitable toward immigrants; however, he argues that there is confusion in the biblical teaching about the treatment of foreigners of the United States immigration policy. He also claims the Bible supports the building up of national boundaries with specific people assigned to different geographic regions by quoting Genesis 10. He also says that both Deuteronomy 32:8 and Acts 17:26 support the building of nations through setting boundaries. He says, “It is clear from this that nation-state boundaries and the division of mankind into different peoples living in different geographic locations is something God ordained and part of a providential plan.”<sup>14</sup> He thus argues against open-border policies for three reasons. The first reason is that we have obligations toward those who are closest to us, our own kin, our own community and nation; the second is that civil authorities are supposed to protect the people under their care; and the third is that open-border policies would harm the

---

<sup>14</sup> James R. Edwards, Jr., “A Biblical Perspective on Immigration Policy,” in *Debating Immigration*, ed. Carol E Swain (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 54.

well-being of American society.<sup>15</sup> He and the Center of Immigration Studies advocate for restrictive immigration laws, but warmly welcome immigrants who are allowed into the country. But it needs to be pointed out that the understanding of nation-states and the policing of boundaries in ancient times are very different from that of the present time.

Edwards also appeals to Ephesians 2:19 and Philippians 3:20 to point out that we are all strangers and aliens in this world, even in the land of our birth, because our citizenship is in heaven. I think he is actually contradicting himself with this statement and in his support of nation-state boundaries. He seems to understand that all things are created by God and, thus, belong to God. So it is unclear to me why he is concerned with separating one from the other, since our citizenship is actually in heaven. His other questionable idea is that he is willing to welcome the immigrants once they have arrived, but they are not welcome to come.

M. Daniel Carroll R. (Rodas), a professor of Old Testament at Denver Seminary, offers a different perspective from Edwards on the immigration issue in his book, *Christians at the Border*.<sup>16</sup> He invites his readers to look beyond popular arguments and probes two of the controversial issues: national identity and economic impact. For national identity, he points to the political scientist Samuel Huntington who claims that the American national identity can be found in “its Euro-Protestant beliefs and values, the English language, and the legacy of Western European culture.”<sup>17</sup> Carroll questions if the restrictive immigration policy of disallowing immigrants will maintain the American

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>16</sup> M. Daniel Carroll R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Carroll R. *Christians at the Border*, 40.



national identity. He argues that this policy tends to isolate the immigrants more as it feels more hostile and unwelcoming, and this slows their process of assimilation rather than encourages them. He gives examples of high profile immigrants who have shown instances of assimilation, which is what the anti-immigration people claims immigrants do not do. I agree with Carroll's analysis. In my experience with the Asian communities, even non-high profile Asians are trying to learn the language and the culture to be part of the dominant community. This is well demonstrated in the high enrollment in English as a Second Language classes among Asians. It is also true that some immigrants do tend to retain their culture. This is something they are familiar with and were brought up with, just as Euro-Americans retain their own European cultures. It is not easy for Asians to let go of their cultures. However, if both sides are willing to come in contact with each other and learn from each other, much knowledge will be gained. By getting to know each other, their assumed fears of the other can be allayed. Together they will create a new identity, instead of fearing the loss of the old identity. This collaboration will create something new, enriching, and transformative that need not be feared.

Regarding the economic arguments, Carroll asks people not to just look at the effects that immigration has on the host country, but also on the emigrant country. He reminds readers that we are all interrelated. When remittances are sent back home, the home situation and general economic status will improve. He says that whatever the policy is, the purpose should be to improve the economic and social well being of the world. I agree that when the home country's situation is better, there will be less need for people to risk taking the difficult journey to move away from home.

Both scholars use scripture to support their claims. Edwards uses an exclusive perspective, setting borders and barriers to keep immigrants away, whereas M. Daniel Carroll R. uses transformational missiology – reaching out to them, and thereby changing the focus of the immigration issue to a discussion of immigration opportunity.

In reality, Edwards is right about not having an open border policy. We cannot just open the border and have anybody come in. We do need some kind of control to maintain civil order and protect the rights and opportunities of people who are already here. Nevertheless, according to the United States Office of Management and Budget, the United States Border Patrol spent \$363 million in 1993, and this sum has increased tenfold to \$3.5 billion currently.<sup>18</sup> Even with the huge budget increase for border security, it is not effective in restricting immigration. With Carroll's suggestion of missional transformation, the United States does not have to make crossing the border so dangerous. They could use the money set aside for building the barrier to build up the poor, instead – to be better educated, to be trained with more skills, so as to have better opportunities – rather than using scare tactics to pit the poor, the less educated, and the unskilled workers against the immigrants. They can also help the migrants settle, and offer them a warm welcome as Edwards suggests. In turn, the immigrants will contribute better to the country. By rejecting these immigrants, they are forced to go underground and, hence, cannot pay income tax even if they want to. Immigrants feel rejected and so the process of assimilation slows down. This country spends an enormous amount of money to fortify the border, which forces migrants to come by other routes, through

---

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Border Patrol Program Budget – FY 1990 through FY 2013*, <http://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/BP%20Budget%20History%201990-2013.pdf>.

mountainous terrains and hot deserts near the border. This strict border control has caused many deaths. By trying to protect the United States' economy from the influx of immigrants, a huge amount of money has been spent senselessly.

### **The Role of Religion in Immigrants' Adaptation**

When migrants arrive at their destination, they are in a strange land. They lose the familiarities of their former lives, and many have come without their families. Even those who come with family members lose the extended family support in their country of origin. This loss of extended family system can be traumatizing. In the face of these traumatic cultural adjustments, religion can play a major role in helping immigrants adapt to the new environment and to help them establish their new identity.

In my own experience and observation of the church, I believe the first step in building community within the church among the immigrants is to show hospitality. I migrated to this country as a nurse with no family members. I worked in a big hospital. My co-workers were mostly Whites. Soon I met my husband who is a Christian, though I was not at that time. When we decided to get married, we found a Chinese-language Episcopal Church close by and were married there. After we got married, I had no intention of joining a church and hardly went there. However, the priest and his wife were very friendly and caring. The parishioners were hospitable. Even though we were not members, whenever there were social events, especially the Chinese festivals, they always invited us to come. I was nostalgic for the Chinese tradition and the food. I found a place that felt like home with familiar voices and food. I eventually got baptized and

became very involved with the church.

In *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches*, Fumitaka Matsuoka says, “Christianity is one of the major religions among Asian Americans, even though it is a minority religion in many of the countries from which we and our ancestors came.”<sup>19</sup> He says the churches have become a place for Asian immigrants to assimilate into the American culture. The churches have also become a place for Asians to find a sense of belonging, and a place where ethnic groups can feel safe in a racially discriminating society.<sup>20</sup> In her book, *Getting Saved in America*, Carolyn Chen also relates the immigration and religious experiences of the Taiwanese immigrants to the United States. She tells stories about how people become religious by becoming American, and how people become American by becoming religious.<sup>21</sup> While I was new in this country, it was the hospitality of the church leaders and members that made me feel welcome and attracted me to the church. I found community in the church, and my assimilation to this country was partly due to the church.

Charles Hirschman summarizes the centrality of religion to the immigrant communities as: “refuge, respectability, and resources”<sup>22</sup> Their religious perception can provide them with some certainty and be an anchor for them to adapt to the new

---

<sup>19</sup> Fumitaka Matsuoka, *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1995), 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, chapter 1.

<sup>21</sup> Carolyn Chen, *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Charles Hirschmann, “The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States” in *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*, ed. Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 413.

environment.<sup>23</sup> The religion that they once took for granted may have new meaning to them now. Participating in the religious activities and rituals help migrants create a sense of belonging. Spiritual needs are better met in familiar languages and cultural settings; thus, migrants tend to look for fellowship in ethnic churches or temples. Because of American religious pluralism, migrants can often find places of worship in their own language and culture in the large cities to fulfill their sociocultural needs. All these religious resources offer the newly arrived migrants refuge from the trauma of loss and separation.

While the broader society may deny migrants recognition and social mobility, Hirschman says that churches can provide them with respectability. Some ethnic churches or religious organizations create parallel social institutions. Migrants may have better opportunities for recognition and social mobility in these ethnic institutions than in the broader community. In the Asian community, many professionals give up their prestige at home and move to this country to secure better education for their children. It can be frustrating and depressing at times not being able to contribute as they did before at home due to the lack of professional credentials to practice their professions in the United States. The church can provide a place for them to continue to contribute and feel useful again.

Hirschman goes on to say that religious organizations not only offer religious and spiritual care to migrants, but also offer them resources and social services. They offer English classes and citizenship classes, provide information on housing, and offer job

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 395-96.

opportunities. Some also offer parental classes to immigrants to help them with the raising of children in a different cultural setting. The faith community has played a big role in the adaptation of the immigrants' lives in the United States. I will explore the role that my denomination, the Episcopal Church, plays in the Asian immigrants' lives in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Episcopal Asian American Congregations**

In Chapter One, I discussed the role religion plays in the life of immigrants and the ways religion has helped immigrants settle in the United States. Carolyn Chen explains that there is a revitalized religiosity among the Taiwanese immigrants. Though some may have been Protestants or Buddhists or even have had no religion before their migration, it is the immigration experience that influences them to begin practicing their religion or to convert to another. She argues that people become religious by becoming American, and people become American by becoming religious.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I will look at the history of the formation of the Episcopal Asian American Ministry in the United States to better understand the broader picture of Asian Americans in the Episcopal Church. Then I will offer two case studies of Asian congregations that share space with dominant White churches to look at issues these congregations face. I will offer my observations and analyses in the end.

#### **History of the Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry**

The Episcopal Church's Asian ministry with the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean people can be traced back to the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The first recorded Asian Episcopal congregation was built by "Ah For," a Chinese Christian who built the Chinese Chapel

---

<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Chen, *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Fred Vergara, *Mainstreaming: Asian Americans in the Episcopal Church* (New York: The Office of Asian American Ministries, The Episcopal Center, 2005), 53.

called Good Shepherd in August 1874 in Carson City, Nevada. He then built another one in Virginia City, Nevada in 1875. However, these ministries were short-lived.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, two more permanent Chinese congregations were founded in San Francisco and Oakland in northern California in 1905 and 1906. Then in 1895, missionary work to Japanese migrants began in San Francisco, and the mission was named Christ Episcopal Church, Sei Ko Kai, later. The Korean Episcopal Ministry was first planned in Hawaii in 1906, and finally began in 1907.<sup>4</sup> Gradually, more Asian ministries began forming within the United States.

Even though Asian congregations were founded, there were few and were scattered throughout the United States. In 1973, the Rev. James Poon, who was recently called from Hong Kong to minister to the Chinese immigrants in San Francisco, voiced his loneliness. He felt a sense of isolation of Asian clergy ministering in the predominantly White diocese. Other Asian clergy people echoed his feelings and formed an Ad Hoc committee to draft a resolution to be submitted to the 64th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1973, which:

Called for the establishment of “Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry in order to deepen and strengthen the existing ministries of the Episcopal Church involved with Asian and Pacific Island peoples as well as to establish new ones.” The word “Asiamerica” was invented to include both American born as well as foreign born persons of Asian ancestry.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 56-58.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 60.



The Resolution was passed with a budget to develop Asian ministries and to hire a staff officer. With a collective voice, six Asian American Episcopal clergy and laity spoke out. The Episcopal Church responded.

The Rev. Winston Ching was the chair of the Ad Hoc committee, and he presented the proposal to the Executive Committee of the Episcopal Church and became the first executive officer to implement and coordinate this ministry: Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry (EAM). The first EAM meeting was held in San Francisco in 1973. The Rev. Pat McCaughan reports about the Rev. Eric Law's remembrance of this ministry,

When the Rev. Winston Ching gathered Asian leaders back in the 1970s, it was the first time Japanese Americans had a real conversation with Chinese Americans because back in Asia we were enemies," Law had said. "But in the United States, we were in a different context. It was the first time many of them had encountered other Asian groups. Asian-American became an identity that did not exist before.<sup>6</sup>

The term Asian American was born out of the historical Civil Rights movement. Just as the Blacks called themselves African Americans, the former "Orientals" identified themselves as Asian Americans.

The EAM office started congregation development and provided support and coordination of different Asian ministries in the United States. This Asian faith community learned the value of working together and the importance of collaboration. They have been meeting every year since then, sharing resources and supporting each

---

<sup>6</sup> Pat McCaughan, "Winston Ching, First Asiamerica Missioner, Remembered," Episcopal News Service, July 5, 2012, <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2012/07/05/winston-ching-first-asiamerica-missioner-remembered/>.

other, especially within each ethnic group. In 2013, they celebrated their 40th anniversary.

By knowing each other and joining forces for mutual benefits, the former Asian enemies were able to overcome their fear and suspicions of each other. They have built up this coalition to have a collective voice, to advocate for each other, and to serve God's people who are minorities in this country. This example of collaboration and mutuality exemplifies how good things can happen when people reach across divisions and get to know each other; the fear of the "other" can be transformed into blessings.

Within the EAM, individual ethnic churches offer resources and services to the migrants. They offer English classes and provide information on housing and job opportunities. This rings true in the Chinese community I am serving. English classes are offered in my church to help migrants. Once I established my presence in the community, people looking for Chinese-speaking employees have called me. Chinese people looking for jobs also let me know. I can then have them contact each other. I know this is a common practice in ethnic churches. By joining ethnic churches, many migrants have extended their network. Ethnic churches act as the gathering place to worship and through networking with parishioners the churches are able to introduce or look for jobs for those who need them. Migrants exchange their experiences in society and learn about American culture from each other. This begins the process of assimilation to the dominant American culture.

As a migrant myself and after having served in a few ethnic Chinese churches, I can see that religious organizations serve multiple roles and functions. In addition to

spiritual and pastoral resources, they offer cultural, social, and political support and social services. All these roles demonstrate the hospitality religious organizations extend in order to welcome strangers into their midst. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, hospitality is frequently mentioned in scriptures. Genesis 18:1-10a tells the radical hospitality that Abraham showed to the three men who turned out to be angels. In Exodus 22:21, Yahweh tells the people, “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.” And in the New Testament, Jesus has taught that, “Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matt. 25: 40b).

Due to fear of scarcity, differences, and misunderstandings, there is anti-immigrant sentiment in the secular life of the United States and also in the churches. The offering of the God-given resources from religious organizations and churches is to show hospitality to the migrants in their new land. This helps them adapt to their new environment. It also shows the Christian ideals of faith and of loving thy neighbor. This is a mandate that we all need to follow. Extending hospitality is also our way of discipleship. However, this should not only be carried out by ethnic churches to their own ethnic group, but should also be carried out by the dominant churches that typically have more resources.

The Episcopal Church has a sign that says: “The Episcopal Church Welcomes You.” This outdoor sign has guided many people to Episcopal churches around the country. It has become a recognizable and welcoming symbol throughout many communities. In a recently published account of the history of the Episcopal Church’s

ministry to the immigrants, David L. Danner says it well, “Results during the ensuing forty years have been at times both gratifying and disappointing . . . but also in no small part to a lack of commitment and interest at the local church level.”<sup>7</sup> The forty years that Danner refers to is the period since the renewed commitment of the Episcopal Church to welcoming immigrants into their midst in the 1970’s.

In those forty years, the EAM office indeed has helped to develop congregations and to provide resources as needed that the office can afford. These congregations have built up a coalition to have a collective voice to advocate for each other. This has certainly been gratifying. When the Rev. Dr. Winfred Vergara was called to be the Missioner of the EAM Office in 2004, he published a pamphlet, *No Longer Marginalized: The Episcopal Asian American Ministry in the 21st Century*, listing all his ideas and visions.<sup>8</sup> It has been ten years since the pamphlet has come out; however, we are still far from being free from marginalized. When it comes to the local level, the EAM Office does not have much influence because local churches are under the jurisdiction of diocesan bishops and the authority of parish rectors.

In the next section I will discuss the experiences of two Asian congregations sharing space with dominant White congregations in the Episcopal Church.

---

<sup>7</sup> David L. Danner, “Immigration and the Episcopal Church: An Ever-Changing Face,” *Anglican Theological Review* 95, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 664-65.

<sup>8</sup> Winfred Vergara, *No Longer Marginalized: The Episcopal Asian American Ministry in the 21st Century* (New York, the Episcopal Church Center, 2004), [http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/asiamerica\\_final\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/asiamerica_final_pamphlet.pdf).

## **Case Studies of Two Asian Congregations**

In the Episcopal Church, there are two types of churches: parishes and missions. The parishes are financially independent and handle their own financial administration, while the missions need financial assistance from the diocese, and the bishop functions as the rector (chief priest) who governs the mission. In the Episcopal Church, there are only a few Asian churches that are financially independent. Asian congregations usually use spaces in a White church under the leadership of a rector. The Asian clergy are associates or assisting priests, and they usually serve under the rectors and do not have much say in church matters. They can only use spaces assigned to them by the church, with worship usually being held after the English service is over or in a chapel or a room in the church. The diocesan bishops can advise the rectors as their chief pastor, can counsel the rectors to treat the ethnic clergy and congregations fairly, but have no authority to demand them to do so unless the diocese provides the funding itself. Thus, the privileged group – the English-speaking group – maintains superior status and power. It is up to this group to exemplify the lives of the disciples of Christ, for Jesus said: “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” (Matt. 25:45).

For the following two case studies, I have interviewed the clergy and visited two Asian congregations in a big city in the United States. The name of the congregations and the people I have interviewed shall remain anonymous so as to protect their identities. Before the interviews, I prepared a few questions to ask about their ethnic background, the church they are serving, the demographics of the neighborhood, their ethnic ministry, their compensation, the parishioners’ contribution, if there is any integration and/or

interaction between the White parishioners and the Asian parishioners in the church, and what attracted them to join and to stay in the Episcopal Church. I shall describe these two congregations below.

### *Church Number One*

Church number one has an Asian priest who is proficient in the ethnic language but was limited in English, initially, but has since improved, tremendously. He received his theological training in his home country, moved to the United States and completed his Anglican Studies in an Episcopal seminary, and was ordained in the United States. He needed a placement after ordination, and the bishop discussed the possibility of starting a congregation with his ethnic language in a White church located in an area with an increasing population of this Asian group. After consulting with the rector, the church school, which has a large population of the ethnic students, and the vestry, the Asian priest was placed in this English-speaking congregation. The diocese, the church, and the school contributed equally to his stipend. The diocese contributed for two years then stopped. The church then took over the priest's stipend with contributions from the school. Other than the general guideline of compensation from the diocese, no policy was set up as to how the parish was compensating this new immigrant clergy.

The new priest began working as a chaplain in the church elementary school. He gradually built up relationships with the families. Six months later, he gathered a few families from the school and started the Asian language service. On Sunday, this small Asian-language congregation worshiped in a classroom while the English-language

congregation worshiped in the main sanctuary. When it was time for Communion, the Asian-language congregation was asked to join the English-language congregation because the rector wanted to develop intercultural ministry. However, English was the sole language for the Communion service. Many of the Asian parishioners left after the Asian-language service without staying for Communion because they were not proficient in English.

Later on, another priest from the same ethnic group joined the diocese. This second priest also received his theological training in his home country and then moved to the United States. He served in another diocese and subsequently moved to this diocese and needed placement. The rector from the same church offered a quarter time position to this priest and paid him minimally with no benefits.

With joint efforts of these two Asian priests, this ethnic congregation grew and the classroom could no longer hold them. They moved the service to the parish hall. After the service, there was coffee hour for the parishioners. The coffee hour was for both congregations. Only coffee and donuts were served. In Asian culture, food represents hospitality. Ethnic churches usually offer lunch for their immigrant parishioners as a welcoming gesture. Coffee and donuts are not symbols of hospitality to them. The Asian group offered lunch instead to the parishioners, but they had to wait till the coffee hour was over to use the parish hall. Some of them left and did not return, some went home first or did shopping and returned for lunch.

Later on, a new rector was called. The first Asian priest resigned from the church and worked full-time for the school as a chaplain in the hopes that a full-time position

would be offered to the second priest. The new rector not only did not offer the second priest a full-time position but he also offered him an even smaller stipend. The rector said that if the Asians pledged enough to pay “their” clergy, then he would pay him more. Nevertheless, the Asians could not afford to pay him a full time salary. Because of the preceding circumstances, the congregants did not trust the rector, so they just paid the second priest under the table instead of pledging. Neither of the priests could bear to abandon the Asian parishioners and their families, so they endured the unjust treatment and continued to minister to the Asian congregants.

For the twenty years that this Asian-language congregation stayed at this church, there were only two members from this group in the vestry. However, according to the first priest, these vestry members felt they were alone and did not have much voice in the vestry meetings. With the previous rector, it was mandatory for all clergy, including the Asian clergy, to attend vestry meetings; they had a seat and voice but no vote. Once the new rector started, clergy were not invited to attend vestry meetings any more, and had no voice at all in church business. The interaction between the two congregations was minimal and superficial. It was limited to the Eucharistic Prayer part of the worship service in English on Sunday, and once or twice a year celebrating multicultural ministries with people from different backgrounds wearing their traditional clothing and bringing their ethnic food. There was no in-depth interaction between the two congregations.



### *Church Number Two*

Church number two is about another newly ordained priest who is from another Asian group. He received his theological education in an English-speaking seminary, so his English was proficient. While he was pursuing his studies, he sought ordination in the diocese he was residing. After ordination, he was placed in an affluent church to start a service in his native Asian language. This area has high population of Asians, especially this group. The bishop was very enthusiastic about starting new ministry in this language in the diocese, so he discussed the idea with the rector and the vestry of the church. The vestry and the rector agreed only to provide space and would not contribute financially. So the diocese paid for the stipend of this clergy to begin this new ministry. When the diocese could no longer support this ministry, the diocesan bishop asked the rector and the Asian priest to find ways to be self-supportive. This ethnic congregation consisted mostly of new immigrants. The parishioners worked in low-paying jobs and were not able to contribute much to the Asian congregation. They were not self-supporting, yet. Since the rector and the vestry had arranged that they would only provide space and would not support this ministry financially, no financial help from the church was offered to the ethnic congregation to pay the priest.

The Asian priest was fairly new to this country and relied on the diocese and the rector's instruction. He also needed the church to sponsor his application for residence status. In order not to stop the sponsorship, which would cause the deportation of the Asian priest, the rector negotiated with the vestry to use the money the church was supposed to contribute to the diocese to pay the curate until he obtained his resident

status. Once the curate got his resident status, he received no further stipend from the White church. The church then separated the ethnic group's pledge from the church, and paid the priest a few hundred dollars a month from the Chinese congregation's account. The priest had to work a secular job to pay his living expenses on the weekdays, and continued to minister to this group on the weekends.

This Asian-language congregation held a service at a side chapel of this church at the same time the White congregation had their service. They used the name of the church; however, there was very minimal effort to integrate the two congregations. When there were major festivals of this ethnic tradition, the Asian congregation would invite the rector and the Whites to their celebration, but the invitation was not reciprocal. They were not invited to any of the White church's activities. The ethnic group was not involved, at all, with the vestry. However, true to their previous agreement, the ethnic group could use the facility freely. Also, some Whites offered English classes to the Asians on Sundays before the service.

When the priest was asked why he stayed with this congregation, he too said he did not want to abandon this immigrant group since he had built up a pastoral relationship with them. He believed if he left, the group would be like sheep without a shepherd. Since he was trained and ordained an Anglican priest, and since he liked the liturgy and theology of the Episcopal Church, he wanted to keep the Episcopal traditions in this group. He believed he had planted the seeds of faith in this group and would like them to flourish in the Episcopal Church.

This priest also shared with me that the White parishioners had lamented that their city had been taken over by the Asians. At that time, 70 – 80% of the students in the public schools were Asians; there were plenty of restaurants and markets in the area that were Asian. Due to this demographic change, they feared that the church would be taken over by Asians also. They would not like that to happen to their church, and developing an Asian ministry was not their choice of ministry.

### **Observations and Analyses**

From these two case studies, I have made some observations and analyses of the situation as follows. Although there are issues specific to these two congregations, I believe that these case studies also point to some general problems that need to be addressed in developing mutuality and collaboration between Asian and White congregations.

In church number one, initially it was the collaboration of the bishop, the rector, and the vestry to place the newly ordained priest in the church to start a new ethnic ministry. Nevertheless once the financial support from the diocese ended, no policy was set up to take care of the welfare of the clergy and congregation. The failure of setting up a policy of support could lead to the abuse of the ethnic clergy and congregation at the parish level. As mentioned earlier, in the Episcopal Church, there are two types of churches: parishes and missions. The parishes are financially independent and handle their own administration, while the missions need financial assistance from the diocese and the bishop is the rector (chief priest) who governs the mission. When situations like

these happen, it becomes very difficult for the bishop to intervene due to the parish status of the White congregation. Unfortunately, the only way the bishops can have a say in the matter is to contribute financially to the ethnic ministry. However, when resources become limited, the bishop often turns a blind eye to the situation. Economics becomes the main influencing factor instead of Christian discipleship. Due to the increase of diversity in society, White churches have been starting ethnic ministries and inviting ethnic groups to worship in their churches. However, due to a lack of understanding on how to enact ethnic ministry and the White churches' perception of their privileged status, situations like this are not uncommon. There is usually no policy on the diocesan level on how to start and maintain ethnic ministries, or how to protect the welfare of the congregations.

The rector did have a good intention to start a new ethnic ministry. Nonetheless, I argue that he had a misconception concerning intercultural ministry. In the name of intercultural ministry, the rector required the Asian congregation to join the second part of the service, which was only in English, a language the rector considered to be common but one which most Asians did not understand. He did not consider the importance of the spirituality of praying and worshipping in one's mother language that is dear to their heart. Putting two groups together with the focus on only one of the groups in no way has the meaning of "inter." There was no opportunity for understanding each other's cultures. According to the Oxford Dictionary, intercultural means "taking place between cultures." Ted Cantle, the founder of the former Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) in United Kingdom, which is dedicated to the promotion of interculturalism and community

cohesion, cites Fiona Sze and Diane Powell, who say, “Interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve. Understanding how cultures move around in a society, introduce social changes, and facilitate cultural integration.”<sup>9</sup> To have intercultural ministry in a church, it must have the currency, the exchange, and the circulation of understanding of each other’s culture in order to enable the integration of the two congregations. From my observation, I would say church number one practices monoculturalism, which William Kondrath adapts from VISIONS, Inc. and defines as, “rejection of differences and a belief in the superiority of the dominant group at the following levels: personal, interpersonal, institutional/systemic cultural.”<sup>10</sup> The White congregation maintained their superiority by only using English language and by being served first without considering hospitality for their fellow ethnic parishioners. The rector’s understanding of intercultural ministry was to create a monocultural ministry, which was centered on the dominant culture – the White culture only.

The other observation I have concerning this church is oppression. There is an inequality of power between the two congregations. The White clergy and congregation have power over the ethnic clergy and congregation. The ethnic clergy suffered from internalized oppression in that he thought it was gracious of the dominant culture to host them, and he never even considered protesting the unjust treatment. I will look into this issue in more depth in the next chapter.

---

<sup>9</sup> Fiona Sze and Diane Powell, eds., *Interculturalism: Exploring Critical Issues* (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2004), quoted in Ted Cante, *About Interculturalism* (Nottingham, UK: Institute of Community Cohesion, 2012), <http://tedcandle.co.uk/resources-and-publications/about-interculturalism/>.

<sup>10</sup> William M. Kondrath, *God’s Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008), 39.

I also observed that there was a lack of trust by the Asian group regarding the White rector and congregation. When the Asian clergy was unjustly paid, and his pay was tied to the pledging of the Asians, it seemed like a business deal, and the Asians felt there was no difference between the churches from the secular world. When the so-called intercultural ministry was limited to doing the worship service in one language, without intentional and meaningful interaction between the two congregations, there was no relationship built. And when the decision-making process, which was controlled by the dominant White group, did not consider the welfare of the Asians, they were only pushed further away than ever.

For church number two, I observed that this ethnic ministry was started by the order of the bishop and with reluctant partners. Again, there was no policy to safeguard the immigrant clergy and the congregation once the bishop withdrew financial support from this ministry. This ministry was not intentional – the rector, the vestry, and the congregation of the dominant culture did not whole-heartedly embrace this ethnic ministry, and fear played a big part in the whole church. The White parishioners were in fear of losing their White identity to Asians in the church and in their neighborhood. The rector was in fear of disobeying the bishop and accepted the newly ordained priest without support from the congregation. The newly ordained priest was in fear of losing sponsorship of his residence and did not protest about his unjust compensation.

This church also demonstrated their oppression. There was inequality of power with the Whites dominating the ethnic group, and the ethnic congregation had no voice in the church decision-making. The Asian clergy also suffered from internalized oppression,

with this unfair treatment. He was quietly taking it inwardly and thought that the White church was generous to offer the group space.

Since the ministry was not intentional, there was minimal interaction between the two congregations and no relationship was built to uphold this ministry. They were actually segregated. Being new immigrants in this country, neither the clergy nor the congregation was empowered to learn how to be self-supportive.

In the Episcopal tradition, when we get baptized, we make our baptismal covenant and renew it a few times a year as a reminder. Let me repeat some of the questions that the officiant asks, “Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ? . . . Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? . . . Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.” Our promises are, “I will, with God’s help.”<sup>11</sup> In these two case studies, I observe that the covenant has not been fulfilled. My sharing of the two cases of the experiences is not to blame or shame the dominant churches but to point out the situation and to remind us of ways we ought to be and things we ought to do as Christians, the disciples of Jesus the Christ – to welcome and care for the least among us, and to fulfill our baptismal covenant.

According to the Pew Research Center, Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial and ethnic group in the United States. They recently passed Hispanics as the largest group of new immigrants to the United States.<sup>12</sup> Whether the Whites accept it or not, the

---

<sup>11</sup> “The Baptismal Covenant” in *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, 1979), 304-5.

<sup>12</sup> Pew Research Center, *The Rise of Asian Americans*, updated edition April 4, 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2013/04/Asian-Americans-new-full-report-04-2013.pdf>, 1.

faces of the United States are changing. Another study by the Pew Research Center states,

Among Asian Americans as a whole, 22% are Protestant, 19% are Catholic, and 1% belong to other Christian groups, such as Orthodox Christians and Mormons. Most Filipino Americans are Catholic (65%), while most Korean Americans are Protestant (61%). Asian Americans as a whole are somewhat more likely than the public overall to be unaffiliated with a particular religion. One-in-four Asian Americans (26%) say they are religiously unaffiliated, compared with roughly one-in-five people in the general public (19%).<sup>13</sup>

With the two statistics, we know that there is an ever-increasing population of Asians, and over 40% of them are Christians and 26% of them are unaffiliated with any particular religion. This is both an evangelistic opportunity and an opportunity to show our Christian hospitality. I have discussed the Christian perspective on immigration in Chapter One. M. Daniel Carroll R., a biblical scholar, writes about immigration from biblical perspectives. His commitment to the mission of the church is to reach out to the immigrants, thereby changing the focus of the immigration issue to a discussion of immigration opportunity.<sup>14</sup> This is inspiring. This is the Christian perspective the church can offer to the secular world. I believe as Christians, this is the approach we should embrace. If we claim we are Christians – the disciples of Jesus Christ the Savior – then the dominant group needs to fulfill their baptismal covenant and reach out to welcome the strangers and the immigrants in transformative ways. They need to share the communal ecclesial power instead of holding on to it by oppressing and segregating the least among

---

<sup>13</sup> Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, *Asian Americans: A Mosaic of Faiths*, July 19, 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2012/07/Asian-Americans-religion-full-report.pdf>, 43.

<sup>14</sup> M. Daniel Carroll R., *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).



them. They need to see it more as a good opportunity to reach out to welcome and serve the newcomers rather than something to be avoided because of their fear of change.

As mentioned earlier about the history of EAM, we see that once the former Asian enemies were able to overcome their fear and suspicion of each other, they built up the coalition to serve God's people who are minorities in this country. This exemplifies how when people reach across and get to know each other, good things can happen; the fear of the "other" can be transformed into blessings. If the former enemies can be transformed into allies, both Whites and Asians can come together to offer their God-given gifts to serve the least among them and show off God's blessings.

Receiving truth sometimes hurts, but as Jesus says, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn 8: 31-32). The truth will liberate us from our own obsession for power and from being oppressed by our power holding. As in another part of the baptismal covenant, we vow to "persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord."<sup>15</sup> Once we know our wrongdoing, we need to turn from our wrong way and turn towards God, and with God's help and grace, transformation will happen. In the next chapter, I will turn to the issues facing Episcopal Asian American congregations and look at them in greater depth, so we can learn from them so as to fulfill our covenant as the disciples of Jesus Christ.

---

<sup>15</sup> "The Baptismal Covenant," 304-5.

## Chapter Three

### Issues Facing Episcopal Asian American Congregations

In the last chapter I shared the two case studies of Asian clergy and congregations and my observations and analyses specific to these situations. These observations and analyses essentially point to some common issues facing the Asian congregations in the White Episcopal churches. These issues are closely related to our doing multicultural ministry in the Episcopal Church. Statistics has shown that Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial and ethnic group in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Migration Policy Institute, a think tank based in Washington D.C. dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide, reports that there were 1.8 million foreign born from China and Hong Kong residing in the United States in 2010, increased from 1.1 million in 2000. The data is based on the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2010.<sup>2</sup> The latest report says, "Chinese immigrants are now the third-largest foreign-born group in the United States after Mexicans and Indians, numbering more than 2 million and comprising 5 percent of the overall immigrant population in 2013."<sup>3</sup> Within three years, the Chinese immigrants have increased by more than 0.2 million in the United States. We have seen racial discrimination since Asian immigrants first came to the United States in the 1700's, and it continues into the present, even in our own church. With this increasing

---

<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center, *The Rise of Asian Americans*, updated edition April 4, 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2013/04/Asian-Americans-new-full-report-04-2013.pdf>, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Kristen McCabe, *Chinese Immigrants in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, January 18, 2012, <http://migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states#1>,

<sup>3</sup> Kate Hooper and Jeanne Batalove, *Chinese Immigrants in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, January 28, 2015, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states>.

number of immigrants, Episcopal churches are becoming more aware of the changing demographics and seem to be reaching out to them, but we must look deeper and harder at the issues facing Asian immigrants in the Episcopal Church along with their post immigration process and together find ways to face and resolve them in a Christian way and not treat them as new immigrants have previously been treated.

In this chapter, I will look into different issues facing Asian American immigrants in the Episcopal Church, especially those who are first-generation immigrants. Because of the immigration process, immigrants undergo a change in their identity. I will first look briefly at the concepts of identity formation related to this project. Then I will look into the issues brought about by the change of identity: lack of voice, internalized oppression, and lack of interaction and integration between the dominant congregation and the ethnic congregation.

## **Identity Formation**

Identity formation is a complex process, in this project I will not go into detail about the process of identity formation from birth to adulthood or identity formation of later generations of Asian Americans,<sup>4</sup> which would require another project to discuss. I will discuss some basic theory that will apply to this project concerning the process of identity loss and adaptation during the immigration process of the first generation of Asian immigrants.

---

<sup>4</sup> For more information on second generation Asian-American identity development, see Cliff Akiyama, "Bridging the Gap Between Two Cultures: An Analysis on Identity Attitudes and Attachment of Asian Americans" *Brief Treatment Crisis Intervention* 8, no. 3 (2008): 253, <http://btci.edina.clockss.org/cgi/content/abstract/8/3/251>.

Much research has been done on identity formation, and researchers such as James Cote, Charles Levine, and Cliff Akiyama admit that the studies have been mostly based on Western cultures and primarily on White, middle classes and two-parent households.<sup>5</sup> With the increasing immigration from non-Western cultures, they remind people to look into the issue from different cultural perspectives. However, Cote and Levine say with centuries of colonial and imperial influences, “Western cultural patterns have set the standards that many other cultural groupings must follow or to which they now aspire,”<sup>6</sup> they just have to begin with the Western culture concepts to start the discussion.

In order to be “useful in understanding cultural and social structural influences on individual development, including understanding how non-20th-century, non-Western cultures might nurture identity,” Cote and Levine use the culture-identity framework, which is based on Cote’s previous work, for their analysis. They state it is consistent with the theory of ego identity formation by Erik Erikson, the developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst.<sup>7</sup> The framework consists of three levels of identity: social identity – people’s locations in society; personal identity – people’s concrete presentations of behavior to others, which includes their personal beliefs and attitudes; and ego identity – people’s subjective sense of continuity of being the same person over time and in

---

<sup>5</sup> James E. Cote and Charles G. Levine, *Identity, Formation, Agency, and Culture: A Social Psychological Synthesis* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. 2002), 125, and Cliff Akiyama, “Bridging the Gap between Two Cultures: An Analysis on Identity Attitudes and Attachment of Asian Americans” *Brief Treatment Crisis Intervention* 8, no. 3 (2008): 251, <http://btci.edina.clockss.org/cgi/content/abstract/8/3/251>.

<sup>6</sup> Cote and Levine, *Identity*, 125.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

different situations.<sup>8</sup> In the framework, these three levels of identity are cross tabulated with three types of societies that represent historical change over a long period of time. Thus we are to recognize the impact of cultural context on the different levels of identity. This is also multidisciplinary to include historical and cultural parameters, as well as sociological and psychological factors.<sup>9</sup> Citing Ann Swidler's work, they claim that "cultures do not absolutely determine a person's adult social identity so much as provide a 'tool kit of resources from which people can construct diverse strategies of action . . . investing them with particular meanings in concrete life circumstances.'"<sup>10</sup> This reminds us that cultures are not fixed and stagnant. We need to keep this idea in mind when we face change in the church.

Cote and Levine further claim that, "adult social identity one forms depends on (a) available resources derived from the community, (b) how an individual packages these resources into a configuration that has meaning in that community, and (c) how that person then strategically invests these resources in the lives of people in that community."<sup>11</sup> These suggestions on social identity formation would be helpful in understanding the adaptation of immigrants in the American culture and thus offers insight in the process of helping the immigrants.

Another researcher, Cliff Akiyama, looks into ways to bridge the gap between American and Asian American cultures. He cites the five stages of developmental model of ethnic identity development suggested by Derald Wing Sue, Professor of Psychology

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 123-24.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 122-23.

and Education in the Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. They are: conformity – the individual conforms with the mainstream dominant culture; dissonance – the individual becomes aware of the contradictions between “negative external conceptions and positive personal perceptions of their ethnicity”;<sup>12</sup> resistance and immersion – the individual finds one’s ethnic culture and tradition and immerses in it, one also looks for occurrences of prejudice against one’s ethnic group; introspective – in this stage, the individual will realize the “negative aspects of full immersion and outward resistance of the dominant culture”<sup>13</sup>; and integrative awareness – the individual will reconcile the conflict between the dominant culture and one’s own ethnicities, they will pick and choose from both cultures.<sup>14</sup>

There are many other theories of identity formation in different disciplines, but I found the two identity development models by Cote and Levine, and Sue to be helpful to those in the dominant culture to understand the adaptation process of immigrants in a new country. Since the Asian immigrants have found the church and a place of belonging, I assert that this understanding can facilitate the interaction and integration of the two congregations.

### **Change of Identity after Immigration**

In the article, “The Loss and Grief in Immigration: Pastoral Care for Immigrants,” Ting-Yin Lee, who has spent time with Canadian, American, and British immigrants

---

<sup>12</sup> Akiyama, “Bridging the Gap,” 258.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid..

<sup>14</sup> Ibid..

from different countries including those from his own country Taiwan, asserts that,

As with any significant life change, immigration results in “a looking forward” and “a looking backwards.” Many immigrants looking forward are excited about the possibilities of a better life – they have dreams, hopes and excitement about the future. At the same time, the act of migration forces the immigrant to experience a dimension of looking backwards. Immigration may involve pain and loss, as people struggle with a severing of family ties, secure jobs, friendship and even pets. Immigrants need courage to face the various sorrows associated with the process of immigration.<sup>15</sup>

Lee points out that the immigration process involves a variety of losses such as:

Loss of status - Many immigrants are well educated in their home countries, but must start over in a new educational system. Loss of job or income - Many immigrants had secure, well paying jobs and must take jobs in the new country with less income and status. Loss of family ties, loss of ties to extended family. Loss of environment - Many immigrants miss their home country environment, climate and familiar countryside. Loss of language, ethnic customs, food. Loss of religion. Loss of friends. Loss of doctors, medical care.<sup>16</sup>

In my observation, the losses the immigrants face lead to one big issue: the change of identity, as Lee says, “Immigration also involves changes in one’s identity, as inner change tries to match outer change.”<sup>17</sup>

One of the greatest fears facing the immigrants during this change process is the loss of identity. As Kenneth J. McFayden argues, “It’s not change we fear so much as loss.”<sup>18</sup> When people migrate, they usually do so to seek better opportunities, however as listed by Ting-Yin Lee, they also have to leave much behind, the things they are familiar with and sometimes even the people or things they loved are lost. In their new environment, they have to do things differently, face uncertainty and confront possible

---

<sup>15</sup> Ting-Yin Lee, “The Loss and Grief in Immigration: Pastoral Care for Immigrants,” *Pastoral Psychology* 59, no. 2 (April 2010): 160.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 163

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth J. McFayden, *Strategic Leadership for a Change: Facing Our Losses, Finding Our Future* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2009), ix.

hostilities. While they need to learn and accept new things, they may also resist the newness. There is tension between what things to accept and what things to resist – the tension between looking forward and looking backward as Lee says earlier.

The fear of the loss of identity is two-fold. First, when one fears a loss of identity, one will fear that the “self” will not be the “self” anymore, the loss is that of the self and the culture that one used to have. Secondly, if “I” am not “I” anymore, that means “I” may have to become someone else. What will this someone be? That is unknown, so uncertainty and anxiety arise, and so does fear. They have to figure out “who they are.”

The dominant culture in the United States is the White European culture, and so is in the Episcopal Church. Because this culture is different from the languages and cultures of Asian immigrants, the immigrants feel different. They may feel slighted and uncomfortable, experiencing both perceived and actual mistreatment. They may be excluded and invisible in social settings including that of the host church. These issues especially arise for immigrants who are not proficient in English. As such, Asian immigrants’ fear of losing their self-identity is real, and they are afraid the loss will be permanent; they will not get back what they’ve lost.

Fumitaka Matsuoka says Asian Americans are in a liminal world, a “place of in-betweeness.”<sup>19</sup> They are caught between cultures and become insecure and Matsuoka coins it as “holy insecurity.”<sup>20</sup> Since the Whites are the dominant power, they are not

---

<sup>19</sup> Fumitaka Matusoka, *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches* (Cleveland: OH: United Church Press, 1995), 54.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-84.



used to the different cultures, and may act out to push these unfamiliar cultures away.

Thus leaving the immigrants in this situation of “holy insecurity.”

Meanwhile within the dominant Euro-American culture, new immigrants are expected to assimilate into the dominant culture. Not only have the immigrants felt they lost their ethnic identities, but they are also expected to melt into this pot and become as Euro-American as possible – this has been described as the melting pot paradigm.

Akiyama says this paradigm is, “where the various immigrant groups would eventually take on the demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics of the native-born population”<sup>21</sup> Akiyama states that this model has been criticized for the potential social intolerance of the immigrants that do not assimilate well into the new White culture.

Since then, many metaphors have been developed for the acculturation of the immigrants in the dominant American culture.

The change of identity after immigration can result in emotional responses: fear, sadness, and anger. Whether it is in White or Asian cultures, sometimes we tend to view fear and sadness as weakness, and anger as aggressive and uncivilized. Thus we are typically not allowed to express these emotions. William Kondrath talks about three dimensions of learning and change: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.<sup>22</sup> Feelings are in the affective dimension and are viewed as unimportant, usually undermined by the cognitive and the behavioral, and deemed unacceptable. Kondrath claims, “Feelings contain knowledge about what we need in a given situation. Feelings bear messages

---

<sup>21</sup> Akiyama, “Bridging the Gap,” 253.

<sup>22</sup> William M. Kondrath, *God’s Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008), 79.

about how to act ethically toward ourselves and in relation to others.”<sup>23</sup> He further argues that we are created as affective competent beings, our feelings are supposed to help us know our world and know how to respond when boundaries are violated.<sup>24</sup> In this ever-changing world, it is easy to be attached to things we are comfortable with and to resist leaving our comfort zones. When we are facing change, we become afraid and sad. If we understand these feelings as God-given, and see them as messages to lead us towards awareness of the world and ourselves, we can help transform them into something constructive. Kondrath states that the feeling of fear is provoked when there is a stimulus of perceived or real danger; the message is that one is in danger and a response is required such as to get to a safe place. There is a need for protection and support.<sup>25</sup> If spiritual leaders are competent in understanding this affective dimension, when working with immigrants, they will understand there is big change in the immigrants’ lives, these immigrants are facing the fear of loss of identity, they will help those facing fear and grief to offer them ways to find a new identity and ways to grieve. However, we are aware now that the ways to deal with these emotions are based on the Western culture; the dominant culture needs to understand how the feelings of fear and sadness will be manifested in Asian cultures. Melissa M. Kelley, a professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, has done work on grief and attachment theory understands that. From theological perspective, she writes about its application to ministry in her book *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry*. Kelly critiques traditional grief

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

<sup>24</sup> William M. Kondrath, *Facing Feelings in Faith Communities* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2013), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 29

theory because it has been based on White Europeans and Americans. She argues that we need “to understand each person’s grief experience as a particular mosaic, fashioned out of innumerable and varied aspects of one’s life, such as one’s history of losses, one’s relationships, one’s ways of making meaning, one’s experience of the Divine, one’s religious resources, one’s sense of community, one’s culture, and so on.”<sup>26</sup> She explains from an attachment perspective that grief and fear are closely linked together. She says when one separates from one’s attachment figure, it triggers anxiety; and when it is a permanent loss, it shakes one from the ground. Her idea to help with the grieving process is helpful in dealing with the situation of immigrants’ grieving process, which I will go into detail in the next chapter. The other less acceptable emotion in Asian culture is anger, and when oppression occurs, Asians often turn their anger inward, which then becomes internalized oppression. I will look at that later in this chapter.

While the new Asian immigrants are searching their changed identity, the dominant culture has given them a new stereotypical identity: the model minority. As discussed in Chapter One, during times of discrimination and oppression, most Asian Americans work hard, remain quiet, and work towards upward mobility, and are often considered to have achieved financial and academic success, thus they are labeled the model minority.

The other identity that Asian Americans feel is imposed upon them is the *perpetual foreigner*. Matsuoka writes, “Most of us are American, yet not fully acknowledged as American. Asian Americans are plagued with this awareness. We have

---

<sup>26</sup> Melissa M. Kelley, *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 49.

been in the United States in significant numbers for 150 years.”<sup>27</sup> In this statement, Matsuoka expresses the sentiment of most Asian Americans. Unlike the European immigrants who typically have lighter skin, Asian Americans have a darker skin complexion and different features. Asians do look different from the White Americans, and are considered non-Americans whether they are already naturalized citizens or natural citizens born in this country. For those who are immigrants or even born in this country with limited English or who speak with an accent are definitely considered foreigners, even though they are citizens of this country. Asian Americans, especially the second generations, become confused and feel rejected by society.

With the immigration process there is not only an environmental change but also an identity change. So immigrants also need to cope with the change in communication styles due to the different language they are using and the different modes of communication. Voice is one of the most important ways to communicate. I am going to look into the issue of lack of voice in the Asian congregations and its impact.

### **Lack of Voice**

In his doctoral project, “Voice and Identity,” Begona Paya Herrero states that humans are social beings, and we desire to communicate; it is our wish to express our cognitive states. He claims other than the linguistic ones, the spoken language covers a lot of communicative functions because it conveys information about the speaker. In oral communication, one can tell something about the speaker, in the quality of the voice and

---

<sup>27</sup> Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 1.

different vocal features used. He says we can make use of our voice to belong to a certain group and also to be unique individuals. We can also form opinions about the personality traits, the mood, the physical health, and maybe the geographical origin of the speaker. He further argues that it also depends on the personality of the listener to understand the judgment of the speaker.<sup>28</sup> This points out the importance of having a voice to communicate. However, when there are language, cultural, or social barriers to the oral communication, much information from and about the speaker will be missed, and this loss curtails the interaction and understanding between the speaker and listener. The lack of voice in the Asian congregation is a big issue that needs to be addressed.

It is said that Asian immigrants are silent or quiet and raise little fuss; the reasons this is said are plenty. One is the reality that some of them have limited proficiency in English or do not speak English at all. While others say little so as not to disrupt harmony with the dominant culture, or they think that they are inferior and their opinions are not worthy. In addition, some of the immigrants are undocumented, so they do not want to draw attention to themselves so they can stay in the country. Like the clergy in the second case study, who needed the church's sponsorship of his immigrant application; he had to remain silent to keep the sponsorship to avoid being sent back. These factors result in a tendency to stay quiet and complain little. All these lead to the lack of both a physical and social voice.

When I was a new immigrant, I had to go through this silence stage. I would like to share my experience of silence. Even though I was born and raised in Hong Kong,

---

<sup>28</sup> Begona Paya Herrero, "Voice and Identity: a Contrastive Study of Identity Perception in Voice" (PhD dissertation, LMU München: Fakultät für Sprach-und Literaturwissenschaften, 2009), 1-2.

which was a British colony, then, I went to English-language school, and I was proficient to read, write, and express myself in English. After I graduated from nursing school with a nursing diploma, I also obtained the license to work overseas. I ventured to England then to the United States, and I worked in Texas and California. When I first left home, I knew my spoken English was not fluent, and I spoke with an accent. However, most people had no problem communicating with me. Nevertheless, I had many bad experiences where White people just looked at my face and before I even said a word, they just turned their heads away and asked for a translator, as if no non-Whites could speak English. That was very intimidating and made me feel inferior, and I didn't want to speak at all. At the same time, it also made me angry, and I did not want to interact with them at all. When I went back to college to get my nursing degree in the United States, I was aware that my English had an accent, and I did not want to show it, so I tried not to speak much. My feeling of inferiority silenced me. And even when I had something to say, I had to work on my thought process to translate from English to Chinese, and then from Chinese to English to express it. Usually by the time I was ready to say what I wanted to say, the group would have moved to other issue. It was not that I did not want to say anything, but I did not have the opportunity. Later on, when I started serving in multicultural ministry in the church, I did not dare to voice my opinions, as I was a layperson and had just started to be involved in ministry; I felt I was inferior to the clergy and the long-time leaders. Again I would not express many of my opinions. During this period, both the outward and inward force intimidated me; I felt I had neither physical nor social voice. I was very confused about my social, personal, and ego identity because

I hadn't found my English voice. In my current situation, I am proficient in English, am a documented resident in the country, have my nursing career as backup. I do not rely on a translator or a sponsorship from the church or work place. Also, I am considered privileged, but I still feel I do not have much voice, so I can only imagine those without these privileges.

Paya Herrero talks about how the personality of the listener also affects the voice of the speaker. This rings true in the experience of my fellow doctoral student Thomas Eoyang, Jr. and me. Eoyang was born and raised in the United States. English is his first language and daily language. He studied English Literature at Stanford University. He is a good communicator in spoken English. However, he had an experience where his parishioner kept commenting on how good his English was, and this parishioner was surprised that English was his first language. And another time, a parishioner commented on his sermon that she did not understand a word he said because of his accent.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned before, I have had experiences where White people just presume any non-Whites cannot speak English. Once the listener has this pre-conceived idea that Asians do not speak good English or any at all, it does not matter what one's English proficiency is, the prejudgment stops the listener from hearing the speaker's voice.

Paya Herrero then explains some important multidisciplinary work on the subject of "voice and identity." He cites Howard Giles' concept of speech markers that, "Speech markers are defined as those extra linguistic, paralinguistic and linguistic cues which differentiate between various biological, social and psychological categories or

---

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Eoyang, Jr., "Re-Mapping the Margins: Theological Reflections on Chinese American Experiences in the Episcopal Church" (DMin Thesis, Episcopal Divinity School, 2014), 29.

characteristics of speakers which are important – actually or potentially – for social organization and social interaction.”<sup>30</sup> He further explains two levels of speech markers proposed by Howard Giles, Klaus R. Scherer, and Donald M. Taylor. Level one deals with subhuman species. He focuses mainly on the level two speech markers that help speakers communicate: “attitudes, beliefs, values and intentions about their own social states as well as processing the emotional significance of the social states of others.”<sup>31</sup> He also says, “The concept of the self arises from other’s reactions to it, i.e., it is only because we see how people react to us that our sense of identity is born, that is, individual arises from the social process. Therefore speech markers are a useful tool we can constantly use to present our ‘self’ in discourse.”<sup>32</sup> When the immigrants cannot communicate due to limited proficiency in English, it lowers their self-esteem. When the English-speaking congregations react with contempt or power over them, it further causes negative self-formation.

In the earlier section, I cited Cote and Levine’s culture-identity framework about three levels of identity: social identity, personal identity, and ego identity. Voice plays an important role in this identity formation. These researchers have pointed to the impact on the immigrants’ identity formation when they do not have a voice.

When immigrants are not proficient in English, they cannot express themselves; they cannot show the dominant church the persons they are. They feel inferior and become internally oppressed and even more silent. When one suffers from internalized

---

<sup>30</sup> Paya Herrero, *Voice and Identity*, 24.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.



oppression, one's social identity is low; when one cannot verbally communicate what one believes, personal identity is affected, too. With immigration, one can become confused, and one's ego can be shattered. It is no wonder that these immigrants suffer from internalized oppression, which I will look into next.

### **Internalized Oppression**

Kondrath explains that, "When people take for granted their socially constructed positions as *less than* or fail to notice that they are being treated as *inferior*, we speak of this situation as internalized oppression."<sup>33</sup> Since Asians or Asian Americans are treated as non-Americans – the perpetual foreigners, and do not have a physical or social voice, they may feel excluded and inferior to Euro-Americans. In addition, some Asians have an ingrained cultural belief of the necessity of harmonious living, and they must maintain this assumed virtue because they are afraid of being labeled a troublemaker or an ingrate. Instead, they try to work hard, stay quiet, and complain very little. Their passivity is a means to survive discrimination. The immigrants push the younger generations towards high academic and financial achievements to help them achieve the American dream. These Asians fail to view their own culture as valuable as Western culture, and they internalize White culture and language as superior. Their behaviors are submissive and result in internalized oppression. As Gale A. Yee points out that some Asians have bought into the White ideology of the stereotype of model-minority "as a means of

---

<sup>33</sup> Kondrath, *God's Tapestry*, 41

upward mobility and white approval.”<sup>34</sup> This illustrates the first stage of Ethnic Identity Development by Derald Sue – conformity.

When one moves to a country with different cultures and languages, it is important to learn that particular culture and language so as to show respect to the receiving country and to facilitate communication and functioning. But the process of learning English and acclimating to Western culture and Western social systems does not require one to give up one’s own culture and language. When immigrants maintain their own cultures and languages, they can take the better of two cultures and make good use of them – the last stage of Sue’s Ethnic Identity Development. However, when one has internalized oppression, the oppressed self becomes internally stunted and damaged, potentially leading to maladaptive behaviors. They become stuck at the first stage of Sue’s Ethnic Identity Development.

I am going to use Mary Sonn and Valerie Batts’ five types of internalized oppression behaviors cited by Kondrath<sup>35</sup> to analyze the two case studies I presented in Chapter Two.

*System beating* – in this behavior, by internalizing being inferior, one may either manipulate others or the system through guilt or some psychological games to go around the system to achieve the goal; or the person may think she or he does not have the power to succeed by herself or himself or to speak out, they then take care of the feelings of the dominant group so they will be viewed favorably. In the two case studies I presented, the two clergy and congregations received unjust treatment, and they did not confront the

---

<sup>34</sup> Yee, “She Stood in Tears amid the Alien Corn,” in *Off the Menu*, 51.

<sup>35</sup> Kondrath, *God’s Tapestry*, 56-60.

dominant congregation, rather they just accepted that “there is nothing we can do to change it if we don’t have the money to support ourselves.” And the clergy and the congregants told the other congregations, “we are thankful to the dominant church because they offered spaces to us.” They wanted to be viewed as being grateful instead of speaking out about the injustice.

*Blaming the system* – they explain that this is a way of not using one’s power to bring about change. The manifestation of blaming and anger may cover up the sense of hopelessness to bring about change. Again, in the case studies I presented, the Asian congregations and clergy did not think they were able to be self-supportive due to the parishioners’ low income and the clergy still relying on the sponsorship of his resident status. They just felt hopeless about not having their own power to bring about change and waited passively for the dominant church to be merciful to them. Instead of bringing about change, they give up the power to change. Instead of raising the issues of their uncertainty about how to be self-supportive to the dominant church, so as to work collaboratively and creatively to bring in revenue to support the ministry, they just gave up. Their hopelessness leads them to feel that they are victims of the system.

*Reactive avoidance of contact* – this avoidance of contact has two forms. The first one is to avoid one’s own group because this group is perceived to be not ethnic enough; the second one is to avoid the other group because the group is afraid of rejection. There can be avoidance of both work and relationship, and sometimes one feels so hopeless that one avoids one’s own group as well as the other group. I assert that this avoidance of contact behavior is the main reason for the segregation of the Whites and Asian

congregations. The Asian congregations are not willing to say too much to their own ethnic congregations because they do not think they can do much since they are also the oppressed; and they avoid the White congregations because they do not think their suggestions will be accepted.

*Denial of cultural heritage* – due to oppression and denial of one's culture, one may buy into the assumption that one's culture is inferior, which results in self-devaluing and self-rejection. The Asian group defers its power to the other dominant group. Since both Asian congregations are using the space of the affluent White congregation, they feel they are at the mercy of this church. Since they have fewer resources and are not self-supportive, they feel they are inferior to the Whites. They just worship quietly as an appendix of the White church instead of claiming their own right as part of the church.

*Lack of understanding or minimization of the significance of racial oppression* – in this behavior, the awareness of racism has long been denied and neglected; the Asian congregations just accepted the oppression as it was. However, it needs to be brought up so that all are aware of the political, social, economic, historical, and psychological significance of racism, which is not what Jesus Christ calls us to follow.

These behaviors are something immigrants need to be aware of so they can see when they have fallen into this trap of internalized oppression. The Whites also need to understand these behaviors of internalized oppression so that they will not add to the oppression or take advantage of the immigrants' already internalized oppression. In the current situation, the dominant group needs to repent and to change its actions and so become real disciples of Christ. With repentance comes redemption, and the dominant

group could find redemption if it not only quit being an oppressor but also starts empowering the minority group to get out of the trap. One way to find liberation from oppression and to empower the minority is for them to develop a voice with which to communicate who they are. When the oppressed group gains that voice then there can be dialogue to develop better communication and more sincere interaction. Nevertheless, when the dominant group powers over the subordinate group, it results in the avoidance of contact from both groups, and no interaction or relationship building will occur. Now I will look into the lack of interaction of the two groups.

### **Lack of Interaction and Integration**

One of the most often used quotes by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. is, “it is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is 11 o’clock on Sunday morning.”<sup>36</sup> This is true in the Episcopal churches that have other ethnic congregations among them. I have given two case studies of Asian-language congregations using the space of White congregations in the Episcopal churches. The reality is there are many cases like these: the Asian congregations are part of the dominant churches but there is no or only minimal interaction between the two congregations.

James H. Cone, the leading black liberation theologian, relates his early church experience of the “unwelcoming” of Blacks in the White church. Cone believes some White church folks thought of themselves as nice because they did not “lynch and rape niggers” and many attended church on Sundays. Cone then says, “They honestly believed

---

<sup>36</sup> Nadra Kareem Nittle, “Ending Racial Segregation in the American Church by Promoting Diversity,” About News, <http://racelrelations.about.com/od/diversitymatters/a/RacialSegregationinChurch.htm>.

that they were Christian people, faithful servants of God.”<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, he witnessed that they did not welcome “all” in God’s house, and not “all” are their neighbors, and no love was shown to them. Cone says that when Christ makes us one, he “has broken down the dividing wall of hostility.”<sup>38</sup> This wall of hostility is the dominant group’s want of power, their Eurocentrism, the status quo of their dominant identity, and the fear of diluting their culture and tradition with another. All these cumulate in the oppression, impairment, and exploitation of the powerless. Their prejudice and fear bind them up to become the oppressors and exclude the minority in their midst.

In *The Color of Faith*, Matsuoka talks about racial and ethnic plurality from a theological perspective. Questioning the stance of the church, he says, “Church gatherings are occasions for reminding them of what is the ‘ultimate justice of things.’”<sup>39</sup> He further points out that when the church, intentionally or unintentionally, favors one group over another, the church “loses the spiritual force of the ‘welcoming each other’ posture and is in danger of becoming little more than a social club.”<sup>40</sup> We can see this in the two cases. When the immigrant group feels it is unwelcome, there is little doubt they would want to interact with the dominant group.

Racism has been ongoing in the United States. Kondrath writes that “Old-fashioned racism refers to the explicit belief that blacks and other people of color are inferior to whites”<sup>41</sup> In the old ways, a lot of people think that racism is only Black and

---

<sup>37</sup> James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 3

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>39</sup> Fumitaka Matusoka, *The Color of Faith. Building Community In A Multiracial Society* (Cleveland: OH: United Church Press, 1995), 125.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>41</sup> Kondrath, *God’s Tapestry*, 50.

White problem and neglect the other ethnic groups, such as Asians, Latino/as, or Native Americans. Matsuoka says it well, “Racism is oppressive not because people of a dominant group have prejudicial feelings about others, but because it is a system that promotes the domination and subjugation of certain racial and ethnic groups. It is the intentional or unintentional use of power on the part of those who are in the position of power to exploit those who are less powerful and vulnerable.”<sup>42</sup> The Episcopal Church is proud to be inclusive, but it has not shown to be so at all churches, especially at the local level. Does the church want to promote racism and to be labeled as such?

As we have seen in the above two case studies, the sole use of English language in the service which the other ethnic group is not comfortable with, and also the unfair use of the facility marginalize the Asian group. It is the mindset of the dominant group that it is “their” language and “their” church instead of “our” church, so the English language takes priority for the dominant group’s convenience and to show their power. This also shows another form of unwelcoming, because the church loses the spiritual force of being the body of Jesus Christ. As Paya Herrero says, people can make use of their voice to belong to a certain group.<sup>43</sup> When the dominant group excludes immigrants, little wonder that they band together to be their own ethnic group with little to no interaction with the dominant group.

As a matter of fact, most of the Whites in these congregations are very proud of their embracing “diversity” in their churches. They boast to other churches about their “inclusion” of other ethnic groups, their sharing of space, and “befriending” other ethnic

---

<sup>42</sup> Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 86

<sup>43</sup> Paya Herrero, *Voice and Identity*, 1-2.

groups. However, their welcoming is on the condition that the immigrants be like them and accept what they, the dominant group, think is good for them. This is Eurocentric. I believe this is what Michelle Alexandra calls “cosmetic racial diversity” in her book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.<sup>44</sup> As Alexandra says, it just makes the institution look good on the outside but the status quo or oppression remains in the structure. Or as Cone says, they think they are nice, faithful Christian people, but are they, really? As mentioned before, Matsuoka says the churches have become a place for some of the immigrants to find a sense of belonging, and a place where the ethnic groups can feel safe in a racially discriminated society. When faced in church, under the same steeple as the dominant group, with the same hypocrisy that secular society gives them, it is no wonder that the Asians withdraw into their own community? Why would they want to mix with the dominant group?

I assert that another reason the Asian congregations distant themselves from the White congregations is the issue of sexual orientation. In her essay in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, Kwok Pui-lan says, “With a sense of moral superiority and cultural pride, some of the bishops from Africa, Asia, and Latin America together with conservative bishops from the United States, denounced homosexuality as a sign of the moral decay of the West.”<sup>45</sup> That is the sentiment of most Asian immigrants. Most of them do not accept homosexuality. Pew Research Center’s report on *The Global Divide on Homosexuality* states that, “In the Asia/Pacific region, where views of homosexuality are mostly

---

<sup>44</sup> Michelle Alexandra, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012), 244.

<sup>45</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, “The Legacy of Cultural Hegemony in the Anglican Church” in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism: The Anglican Communion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-lan (New York: Church Publishing, 2001), 64.



negative, . . .the Philippines (73%) say homosexuality should be accepted by society; 54% in Japan agree,” and “majorities in South Korea (59%) and China (57%) also say homosexuality should not be accepted by society.”<sup>46</sup> Their fear is that to interact with the White congregation, first they are afraid this issue will be imposed on them and they have to confront it, which they do not want to do. The other fear for the immigrants is that their children will be brainwashed by this idea, this is another reason why some Asians do not interact with the White congregations.

Jesus has given us two commandments; he said, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31). We are asked to love our neighbors as ourselves, if one group dominates and oppresses the other group, it is not loving our neighbors. This dominance and oppression causes separation, and there is no interaction. How can we know each other and how can we love each other? Interaction is a big step to knowing each other. In my next chapter, I will look into ways to engage in cross-cultural understanding and community building.

---

<sup>46</sup> Pew Research Center, *The Global Divide on Homosexuality: Greater Acceptance in More Secular and Affluent Countries*, updated May 27, 2014, <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Homosexuality-Report-REVISED-MAY-27-2014.pdf>, 3.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Models for Cross-cultural Dialogue and Community Building**

In previous chapters, I have discussed the immigration history of the United States and the history of Episcopal Asian American Ministry, shared two particular stories of Asian American congregations with my observation and analyses, and the issues facing the Asian American congregations in general. In this chapter, I will look at ways that will help facilitate the integration and reconciliation of Asian congregations sharing space in the White Episcopal churches. I will focus on five areas: cross-cultural understanding of emotions, radical welcoming, the Cycle of Gospel living, guidelines for multicultural dialogue, and Asset-Based Community Development.

#### **Cross-Cultural Understanding of Emotions**

One of the issues I reviewed in Chapter Three is the immigrants' change of identity due to immigration and the loss and grief associated with it. In this section I would like to argue that the emotions of loss and grief are culturally and socially constructed and cross-cultural understanding is important for building bicultural communities. To promote cross-cultural understanding, I want to look at what is culture. The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition of the University of Minnesota defines culture as "the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also

distinguishing those of another group.”<sup>1</sup> Each cultural group forms their identity and learning in their social environment. Musimbi Kanyoro says, “Often culture is subconscious, so ingrained that we do not hear or see ourselves in our cultural skin.”<sup>2</sup> In multicultural settings, we have different groups with diverse backgrounds. They may continue to be separate entities, each remaining monocultural and not interacting or integrating with each other. This is one of the behaviors of oppression and internalized oppressions – the avoidance of contact. Intercultural ministry needs to bring the different groups together. People need to be aware of cultural differences and respect those who are different from them so as to avoid miscommunication.

I would like to share a story of miscommunication from my own experience. When I was young, there was a church around the corner where I lived. Wherever I went to school, I passed by this church. On the top of the church, there was a big plaque in Chinese saying: “Believe in Jesus, you will have water buffalo.” I had never seen a real water buffalo. I did not understand the relationship between Jesus and water buffalo. I asked my parents, they just thought it was some crazy Christian idea. The explanation of a crazy Christian idea did not satisfy my curiosity, so I kept asking people. It was not till much later then I found out the answer. Finally, I had a classmate who was Christian, so I asked her about it. She said I made it up, she never heard anything like that in the Bible. So I took her to look at the plaque. When she saw it, she became embarrassed. She explained to me that part of the writing on the plaque had fallen out. It should mean,

---

<sup>1</sup> “What Is Culture?” University of Minnesota – Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, last modified May 27, 2014, <http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro, “Cultural Hermeneutics: An African Contribution,” in *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible*, ed. Musa W. Dube (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2001), 101.

“Believe in Jesus, you will have eternal life.” Once she said that, I realized what had happened and what it really meant. “Eternal life” in Chinese is: 永生; water buffalo is: 水牛. With one dot and one line on the top of the word “eternal” missing, it has become “water”; and one stroke in the bottom of “life” fell off, it has become “buffalo.” Something meaningful became something ridiculous.

This experience has become a good reminder for my multicultural ministry and being a Christian. In a diverse community, because of different cultures and languages, it is very easy to have something like a dot or a stroke missing and cause some serious miscommunication. Thus, something wonderful and meaningful was misunderstood as something ridiculous. Instead of embracing eternal life, we ridiculed it as a water buffalo. In order to illustrate this, I would like to discuss the importance of cross-cultural understanding of emotions, by using grief as an example.

Dairine M. Pearson and others have contended, “Asians and Asian Americans seek and perhaps benefit from social support less than European Americans in coping with stressful life events.”<sup>3</sup> They have reviewed many research findings to support their claim. They argue that the popular models that deal with grief used in the United States are not applicable to people from other cultural background. Based on the work by Heejung S. Kim, David K. Sherman, and Shelley E. Taylor, they claim,

Asians and Asian Americans, who are from more collectivistic cultures than European Americans, are more reluctant to explicitly ask for support from close others, because they are more concerned about potentially straining relationships, losing face, or making others overly concerned about their problems. That is,

---

<sup>3</sup> Dairine M. Pearson, Heejung S. Kim, and David K. Sherman, “Diversity Issues in Thanatology: Culture, Social Support, and Coping With Bereavement for Asians and Asian Americans,” *The Forum* 35, no. 2 (April 2009): 7-8, <http://people.psych.ucsb.edu/sherman/david/pearsonkimsherman2009.pdf>.

Asians and Asian Americans are more concerned about the potentially negative relational consequences of seeking overt social support and consequently, are less likely to pursue it.<sup>4</sup>

Pearson and others thus expand the social support concept in time of bereavement to include both explicit and implicit social support. They explain that implicit support is the emotional support obtained from social networks whereby people do not have to expose or discuss their problem, specifically. Thus, people do not have to risk disturbing relationships. The implicit support is more effective in the Asian community. While White Americans rely mostly on explicit social support, Asians and Asian Americans rely equally on both explicit and implicit social support; sometimes even more so on implicit support.

By understanding this difference, we can know that even when Asian immigrants are grieving, they will not explicitly express it, so as not to be viewed as weak, or to lose face, or to be a burden on others. They may, instead, substitute their real feeling with an acceptable one, like being quiet or by projecting their feelings onto others, telling people they are fine but “so-and-so” is not. I suspect this explains why Asians do not often express anger when they are treated unfairly, instead, they suffer silently or turn their anger inward towards themselves. Or when they are sad and need comfort, they put on a strong face. Instead of getting help, they push people away. So when Asians are grieving over their loss of identity, church leaders need to understand they should not take it at face value. In my experience, Whites say they do not know because the Asians look fine and say they are fine.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 7.

Melissa M. Kelley looks at people's grief experience as mosaic, formed by many aspects of one's life.<sup>5</sup> Her idea is helpful in dealing with the situation of immigrants' grieving process. Based mostly on professor and researcher Lee Kirkpatrick's work on attachment to God,<sup>6</sup> Kelly says that religious belief can help us "to achieve proximity to God," to see God as "a haven of safety in times of distress or crisis," and "God as the ultimate secure base."<sup>7</sup> She suggests that ministers can function as a secure base "by offering consistency of care and consistency of message."<sup>8</sup> Further, "Ministers and faith communities have the great opportunity to influence this shaping in ways that lead to healing and wholeness."<sup>9</sup> In my own experience, this is happening in the ethnic churches. After the feeling of loss of identity in the immigrant community, the ethnic ministers and the faith community have offered them attachment figures. I believe that is what Carolyn Chen talks about the Asian immigrants' becoming more religious after their immigration to this country,<sup>10</sup> and Fumitaka Matsuoka states that immigrants find the faith community as a place of belonging,<sup>11</sup> as I mentioned in Chapter One. The ethnic faith community has been faithful to their calling to help their own ethnic groups in the community. The situation of Asian immigrant congregations in a White Episcopal Church can also become a healing process for the immigrants if the dominant church would follow the

---

<sup>5</sup> Melissa M. Kelley, *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 49.

<sup>6</sup> Lee Kirkpatrick also draws his proposal of the attachment to God as a dynamic process on the work of Mary Ainsworth, an attachment researcher, see Kelley, *Grief*, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>10</sup> Carolyn Chen, *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Fumitaka Matsuoka, *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1995), 13-52.

way that Jesus Christ has taught us. While the Asians immigrants are grieving their loss of identity and experiencing discrimination in the secular world, the sharing of worship space by White Episcopal church with the Asians could be reconciliatory work. It could be a way to show their Godly action instead of doing what the larger society does. They can really show how the church is a safe place for them; the immigrants are God's children, and their brothers and sisters.

Melissa Kelly has suggested in her case study some ways to minister to people after loss, I believe her suggestions can also be applied to this situation and can offer general guidelines as to how the dominant church can offer pastoral care when immigrant parishioners' grieve over their loss due to immigration. Her suggestion is: understanding, acceptance, and hope.

I just commented on the understanding of cultural differences on grieving. The ethnic parishioners are already in the church; they have found some attachment figure, be it God or the minister, or the people in the community. As Kelly says, one's grieving experiences are formed by mosaic factors, after the dominant church understands the immigrants' culture, they need to accept their quietness and their not asking for help or complaining, and they should not look down on the different experiences or abuse their quietness, and they should not accept only one culture, the White culture, as the norm. The dominant group leaders, be it the bishop, rector, or vestry, need to initiate the implicit help. In John 9: 1-12, we read that a blind man who was blind from birth was picked to be healed by Jesus. This man did not ask for it. After his disciples' inquiry, Jesus saw that the man was blind from birth; he healed him without his asking. This blind

man did not know who Jesus was. Once he was healed, he became an evangelist and testified for God's grace. Jesus has shown us we need to be active in our compassion to those in need and not just be passive and wait for people to come and ask for help. And if we stay-put inside without observing what is going on outside our own building, or close the door without letting anybody in, we will just become stale and eventually diminish, like the Chinese plaque that fell apart in my water buffalo story. Truly, this used to be the attitude of the Episcopal Church. She put the sign, "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You," outside the church and expected people to come in. Now she realizes it is not working and has been more proactive in going outside the church to welcome people.

After the Whites have welcomed the Asians into the church, and have shown their acceptance of whom the immigrants are, the dominant group needs to act as an ambassador of God and not be the oppressors. They need to show the immigrants that they really are safe in church. They need to show that the Episcopal Church is really a godly and inclusive place, and not like the secular world. This offers hope to the immigrants that they will be healed and be well in a new country. As a result, the immigrants will be like the once-blind man who testifies the grace of God manifested by the Episcopal Church. This welcoming offers them hope of redemption and reconciliation to the hostile world, and helps immigrants find their new identity in the United States and especially in God. This process takes time, but is a great missional opportunity, so the leaders of the dominant group need to take time to listen, observe, and build up the relationship so they can offer the implicit help the immigrants need.



In order for the two groups to understand each other, the first step is to be in contact with each other. They need to be in dialogue so as to experience and begin to understand their differences. Otherwise, each group will just live in their own monocultural comfort zone and be puzzled by and judge the others' behaviors and actions. Like my experience, if I had just accepted my parents' explanation and did not bother to keep questioning, I would have always misunderstood Christians as just being crazy, and I would not know the truth of Jesus and eternal life. With this internalized oppression, then, many Asians feel intimidated about approaching the Whites. Thus, the leaders from the dominant culture need to take the initiative to approach the Asian immigrant parishioners compassionately and pastorally and to truly welcome them into the Episcopal Church.

When I visited the two Asian congregations, I asked the parishioners why they stayed at the Episcopal Church. The answer was that some of them were Anglicans in their own country, and they liked the Episcopal liturgy, so they wanted to continue their spiritual practice in Episcopal Church in the States. Some of them said when they joined the church, they were told Episcopal Church was an "inclusive" church. They saw that an Asian congregation was worshipping in a White church, so it must be true. And even though they found out differently later, they had already established a pastoral relationship with the priest and the fellow parishioners, so they stayed. Sharing space with an ethnic group seems to be a gesture of welcoming to the immigrants. Now I will look into the spiritual aspect of welcoming.

## Radical Welcoming

Stephanie Speller, an Episcopal priest and Canon for Missional Vitality in the Diocese of Long Island, writes on radical welcoming in the Episcopal community and hopes to help other denominations, too. Speller relates her experience of “unwelcome” as a young black woman when she was rejected by an Episcopal community. She also shares her later experience of “welcome” into another Episcopal community, one that welcomes all sorts of people: different skin colors, different sexual orientations, different ages, and different social classes. Her conflicted experiences have made her wonder what can be done to erase the long-time experiences of rejection, and unwelcoming, even with the welcoming community. This has inspired her to do a study of eight churches to examine how these churches embrace “The Other.”<sup>12</sup> She calls her study “The Radical Welcome Project.”<sup>13</sup> Spellers writes that “Radical Welcome is the spiritual practice of embracing and being changed by the gifts, presence, voices, and power of The Other: the people systemically cast out of or marginalized within a church, a denomination and/or society”<sup>14</sup> and is, also, “a fundamental practice, one that combines the universal Christian ministry of welcome and hospitality with a clear awareness of power and patterns of inclusion and exclusion.”<sup>15</sup> She helps people see the positive aspects of “The Other,” those who are oppressed and marginalized, and she helps them become aware of our fundamental Christian understanding. Steven Charleston, a retired Episcopal bishop and

---

<sup>12</sup> Stephanie Spellers uses “The Other” as the people systemically cast out or marginalized within a church, a denomination, and/or society.

<sup>13</sup> Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other and the Spirit of Transformation*. (New York: Church Publishing, 2006), 5-7.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 6

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 11.

former dean of the Episcopal Divinity School, comments further that, “Radical welcome is a process. It is a process by which isolated parts of a whole community are brought together in creative and compassionate ways to generate a more integrated, balanced and dynamic mixture. Not a melting pot or a stew of differences, but a community that works well, prays well and plans well together.”<sup>16</sup> This all points to what a church, the house of God, should embrace to create the kingdom of God on earth. If the Christian churches cannot function as the spiritual leaders against injustice and oppression but, rather, are part of it, we cannot but lament that our Christian churches are losing their positive status in society, since we are no different, if not worse than, the secular people.

After looking inward to our emotion of fear, our outward and inward oppression, our voice or lack thereof, and our mandate as Christians to welcome the others, how do we transform ourselves to offer radical welcoming? How are we going to be a more integrated, balanced, and dynamic community creatively and compassionately?

In her book, Spellers begins by using the concept of “embrace” as proposed by Miroslav Volf, a Croatian Protestant theologian, to understand radical welcome. This concept includes the four movements of mutual embrace: the first is to open the arms – this is to create space for others to come in. The second is to wait – to wait at the boundary of the other to come in, wait for the other to open to you. The third is to close – after the other comes into the embrace, there is closing. This is not the same as disappearing, or melting into each other, or merging into undifferentiated beings. The identity remains different, but may be transformed. This is not to master the other, but to

---

<sup>16</sup> Cited in Spellers, *Radical Welcome*, xi.

build up relationship. The last is to open the arms – since the two are not melted or merged, there is the time to open the arms and to reflect on one’s own identity, and be enriched by the experience.<sup>17</sup>

This is a good image to use in imagining mutual welcoming in the church. “Mutual” means willingness from both sides. It is not the imposition from one side or the absorption of the other. It leaves room to reflect on the experience, and when both are enriched by the experience, relationship will be built. This is what churches wanting to do multicultural ministry need to be mindful of; this type of community building takes time, patience, and intentionality.

This image of the “embrace” works for those who accept bodily touch; however this may not be an appropriate gesture for welcoming new Asian immigrants, initially. Asians usually do not like embracing as much as Whites do. This image may need to change to reflect cultural sensitivity. I would argue that to use this concept for Asians, we might change the image of an embrace to a handshake, which the Asians usually do at the first encounter. Both embracing and handshaking create the same concept of welcoming, and we can modify the four movements of embracing to handshaking.

The first movement is to extend the invitation – the hand, the other may accept or not. The second stage is to wait; the waiting period can tell many things. It can tell if one is being genuine or if the invitation is superficial, looks anxious, is impatient, condescending, warm, or hospitable. Once it is accepted, the two hands touch, as in the embrace when the two bodies touch. This hand touching, along with other body language,

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 12.

will tell if the contact is superficial, only out of courtesy; or if it is meant to be overpowering; or is given with contempt; or with warmth and sincerity, and, therefore, it may be transforming. And when it is time to part, both are free to go. One can treasure the experience or loathe the experience. This contact can be the beginning of a relationship or one brief encounter only. But this can also be a mutually welcoming experience for both groups.

If we use this image as a metaphor for the welcoming of an ethnic group to the church, we have already learned that we need to be culturally sensitive. In the two case studies cited in Chapter Two, we see that the embracing was not mutual. One side dominated the other, and the embrace was superficial. In one of these cases, the “welcoming” was imposed upon by the other dominant figures, and, as a result, it has not been a good experience for the minority group.

Spellers contends that radical welcoming is about the receiving and offering of *welcome* – mutuality. The participants want to tell the others: “May I know you better?”<sup>18</sup> This extending of invitation takes courage, because one may experience rejection, something unexpected or unpleasant, or something one is not accustomed to. However, it can also be a new and transforming experience. Spellers further explains the word “radical” that it is not the usual connotation of being unreasonable, undisciplined but should be viewed as meaning to “amplify the welcome, broadening and deepening and launching it to the next level. It also indicates a deep, fierce, urgent commitment to some

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 13.

core ideal.”<sup>19</sup> For Christians, this ideal is one at the root of our faith; it is getting down to the roots of Christianity. For Episcopalians, it is, furthermore, getting down to our baptismal covenant – to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves; and to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.<sup>20</sup>

Offering a radical welcome is not an easy thing to do. It is much easier to keep the status quo, with everyone doing what one is comfortable with but remaining segregated. Nevertheless, that is not what Jesus showed us to do; he mingled with all kinds of people and welcomed them to his table and was welcome to their tables. To break open this boundary and barrier takes faith and, as Spellers says, a spiritual practice.

With an increasing Asian immigrant population in American neighborhoods, many dominant White churches have decided to start ethnic ministries. However, like the case studies I shared, they may not know how to do it, or they may misunderstand the meaning of intercultural ministry. In the last two or three decades, many institutions have dedicated their work to inclusion and diversity, such as Kaleidoscope Institute, based at Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, California, which offers training to address race and diversity issues in faithful and constructive ways, and to prepare church leaders to create sustainable churches and communities. It is “For competent leadership in a diverse changing world.”<sup>21</sup> The other is VISIONS, Inc., based in Roxbury, Massachusetts, whose

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>20</sup> “Baptismal Covenant,” in *The Book of Common Prayer*, 304-5.

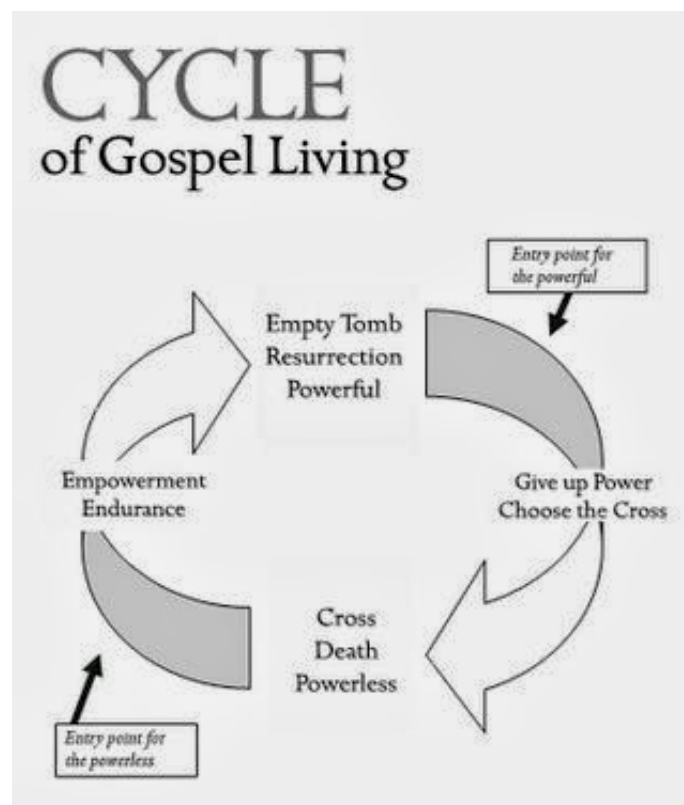
<sup>21</sup> This is listed on the Kaleidoscope Institute’s Web site: <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org>.

vision is, “to be a catalyst for a more equitable world where differences are valued and used for the benefit of all.”<sup>22</sup> I draw upon their work for the discussion below.

## Cycle of Gospel Living

When I began to be involved in multicultural ministry, I read the books written by the Rev. Eric Law, who later founded the Kaleidoscope Institute. Law uses Jesus’ life, crucifixion, and resurrection to exhort us to live the Cycle of Gospel living.

Below is a diagram of the *Cycle of Gospel Living* from the Kaleidoscope Institute.<sup>23</sup>



<sup>22</sup> “Who We Are. Vision Statement,” VISIONS, Inc. Roxbury, MA, <http://visions-inc.org/who-we-are/>.

<sup>23</sup> Eric H. F. Law, “Cycle of Gospel Living,” in *Kaleidoscope Institute: For Competent Leadership in a Diverse, Changing World, Modules 3 to 7* (Los Angeles, CA: Kaleidoscope Institute, 2009), 27.

In this Cycle of Gospel Living, Law urges us to do power analysis in multicultural setting. For example, when in dialogue, if a person perceives s/he is the one with power, then this one should listen, whereas the one perceived to have less power should speak up. This certainly is an ideal situation, however, this also needs to be intentional for the one with power needs to be willing to let go and share the power with those who have less to assume, so as to help them feel empowered. This is a powerful message, but not easy to carry out on our own will. Whenever people have power, it is typical for them to want to hold onto it.

When there is an inequality of power, one group powers over the other, and it becomes oppression. Jesus has shown us how to let go of our power through his death on the cross. As Paul tells us in his letter to the church in Philippi that Jesus Christ was in the form of God, he did not exploit his status but emptied himself and took the form of a human and slave. In the form of a human, he humbled himself and was obedient to God even to death on a cross (Phil. 2:5-8). But he also shows us his regaining of power through his resurrection.

To illustrate how this Cycle of Gospel Living can help build bicultural community, I will use the example of “Mutual Invitation” in facilitating group dialogue. In this model, the facilitator or leader starts by sharing one’s opinion, then randomly invites another to speak; when this invitee finishes, s/he will invite someone else to speak. These participants can also choose not to speak if they so desire. With this method,



all the participants have a chance to speak but are not forced to.<sup>24</sup> As Law explains about this model, invitation is a way of giving up power and of giving over power. The leader does not dominate; everyone is offered a chance to speak. One also has the power to decline to speak. I think this model does help when there is a dialogue among a group with different powers. As I have said when I first began to be involved in ministry, I did not feel I had the physical voice to speak up, as I was aware of my English with an accent and my proficiency to express it. Usually by the time I was ready to say what I wanted to say, the group would have moved on to another issue. And I did not feel I had a social voice, as I was a layperson and I deferred to the clergy and other leaders. But in Mutual Invitation, I had a chance to express my opinion. I assert that using Mutual Invitation to begin a dialogue among multicultural groups would be beneficial. This empowers those who feel they do not have a physical or social voice to have one.

One caution to using the Mutual Invitation is to ensure there is a facilitator who is familiar with this process and has the skill and power to step in to ensure that the one who has power will not dominate the dialogue and, thus, give a fair chance to everyone. As discussed before, when one has power, it is not easy to let go or share the power. One who is the leader is used to leading the dialogue; it is ingrained in her/his cultural skin to keep the conversation going, and whenever there is a pause, s/he tends to fill in the silences without considering that someone may need time to think before responding, just as my previous experience shows. The one with less power may feel s/he is not secure in her/his social or physical voice, and they need help of the facilitator to be empowered.

---

<sup>24</sup> Eric H. F. Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 82-83.

The facilitator needs to explain the process clearly to everyone and carry it out, religiously. If need be, they should encourage and empower those who are timid in their voice. If there are people not proficient in English, an interpreter should be used. This takes time, patience, and practice. Practice makes perfect, but it needs to be tried on. This leads us to the next step of interaction between the multicultural congregations.

### **Guidelines for Multicultural Dialogue**

The VISIONS, Inc. has devised some guidelines for recognizing and valuing differences to help multicultural dialogues. These guidelines make the participants feel safer to express their thoughts. Once they feel safe, they can go deeper into the discussions and build up trust. As scripture says, the truth will set us free, and once people go deeper, they will have self-discovery. William Kondrath has adapted these guidelines to work with Christian communities, and he says that when people open themselves, they allow God's transforming Spirit to enter, and this Spirit challenges us to be radically inclusive. Even though the guidelines are worthy and aim to help multicultural groups in dialogue, I assert that preparatory work needs to be done for both groups before beginning any dialogue. The rationale and procedures need to be explained in depth and in one's own language, beforehand. For the dominant group, they need to be reminded that it is time to listen and learn and not time to dominate the conversation. For the Asians, many of who suffer from internalized oppression, they need to understand that it is not their job to assimilate to the American culture because they have the tendency to want to conform to it. Furthermore with the cultural baggage of not wanting

to risk “straining relationships, losing face, or making others overly concerned about their problems,”<sup>25</sup> as mentioned earlier, they need to be empowered to open up. When the preparatory session is done in their own language, beforehand, it gives them the chance to ask questions without feeling the burden of wasting the Whites’ time or appearing to be ignorant.

Here are the VISION’s guidelines as summarized by Kondrath.<sup>26</sup> I will expand and adapt them to the purpose of this project:

1. Try on.
2. It’s okay to disagree. It’s not okay to shame, blame, or attack oneself or others.
3. Practice self-focus.
4. Practice “both/and” thinking.
5. Be aware of intent and impact.
6. Take 100 percent responsibility for one’s own learning.
7. Maintain confidentiality.
8. It’s okay to be messy.
9. Say ouch.

Kondrath says that the “Try on” guideline invites us to be creative to try on new ideas, new processes, new relationships, and new perspectives. He suggests looking at issues as *adaptive challenges* rather than a *technical fix* by citing the work of Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, professors at Harvard University. They describe “technical fix” as people with authority applying their expertise to fix problems, whereas “adaptive challenge” is to learn new ways of working. This is a good way to remind the participants that cultural differences are not problems but, rather, different experiences and perspectives, and this is the time to create new experiences and identities together.

---

<sup>25</sup> Pearson, Kim, and Sherman, “Diversity Issues in Thanatology,” 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> William Kondrath, *God’s Tapestry: Understanding and Celebrating Differences* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008), 4-25.

The second guideline is “It’s okay to disagree.” Because we have different experiences and perspectives, we do see things differently. One example I like to use to illustrate this point to my parishioners is the Indian folklore of “The Blind Men and the Elephant.” Our vision of the elephant depends on the angle from which we look at it and the part of the elephant we touch. Each will describe the elephant differently, and nobody is wrong because we “see” things through our individual experiences. Thus, it is okay to disagree, but we must remember to respect and accept others’ experience. When disagreements arise, it is easy to point fingers and blame and shame. So we need to understand that blaming and shaming is actually avoiding one’s responsibility, and this avoidance does not move us forward but, rather, keeps us stuck in our division. This can easily happen in Asian groups because this is part of their cultural baggage of not wanting to lose face.

The third guideline is to “practice self-focus.” This guideline is to encourage using “I” statement as the speaker and to avoid generalization. Thus one accepts one’s responsibility of thinking, and believing. The other part is for the listener to focus on her or his feeling while listening and take responsibility for it. This guideline is not easy for Asian immigrants. First, Asian culture generally focuses on community and not individual, they usually tend to use the pronoun “we” instead of “I.” Second, they do not like confrontation; it is easier for them to use other people like “they” to project their thoughts. This certainly needs to be understood and takes practice.

The fourth guideline: “Practice of ‘both/and’ thinking” is similar to the idea of Episcopalian Spirituality, taking the “via media,” or the middle way to be mutually

inclusive, to include some parts of both sides. This helps in respecting both groups instead of one group having power over the other. By respecting and accepting the others' opinions, the way of walking together is opened up. However, as Kwok Pui-lan points out, the "Anglican Communion was formed as a direct result of colonization."<sup>27</sup> Many Asian countries have been colonized by the West. Kwok cites the work of Edward Said, who is considered the founder of postcolonial studies:

Said links directly the structures of colonialism with Western knowledge production and cultural representation. The 'East' was presented in these writings stereotypically as female, passive, despotic, backward, and irrational; while the 'West' represented the masculine, aggressive, democratic, progressive, and rational. Such skewed misrepresentation contributed to creating in the public mind the prejudice that the 'East' was inferior: these people could not rule themselves and had to be ruled.<sup>28</sup>

Because of internalized oppression, a colonized mindset, and cultural baggage of avoiding confrontation, many Asians think their opinions are worthless. Instead of voicing their opinions to bring about change, they give up the power to the dominant group. To believe in a "both/and" culture and to voice their opinions are not easy things for Asians to practice. They need to be empowered and encouraged by the dominant group to abandon both their colonized mind set and cultural baggage.

The fifth guideline is to "be aware of intent and impact." "Intent" is someone's intention to do or say something. The "impact" is how the words and actions affect other people. Sometimes the intent has a different impact than the speaker intended. We need to be aware of this because it can be offensive and, sometimes, can even be racist. Just

---

<sup>27</sup> Kwok Pui-lan, "The Legacy of Cultural Hegemony in the Anglican Church" in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism: The Anglican Communion in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-lan (New York: Church Publishing, 2001), 49.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 50.

like the example I gave about Eoyang's experience of being complimented on his English. The speaker's intention was to praise him, but its impact was the message that all Asians are assumed to be foreign born and, therefore, do not speak good English.

The sixth guideline is to "take 100 percent responsibility for one's own learning." Kondrath explains that people in the minority are usually treated as being inferior, and they have to learn the dominant culture, but the reverse is not true. However, with the increasing Asian immigration population, it is becoming increasingly clear that the dominant culture needs to learn about the immigrants' cultures so as to become culturally competent. In one of her sermons, the Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool preached on "Cultural Humility" to the clergy in the Diocese of Los Angeles.<sup>29</sup> She argued against using the term "cultural competence," because in using that term, we are telling people we know all about not only our own culture but also the other's culture; whereas, if we practice cultural humility, we show people that we would like to learn about their culture and invite them to share it with us. I can affirm this understanding with my own experience. My White mentor shows her humility of not knowing our culture and her willingness to learn from Asians. By doing so, she builds up a relationship with us. She does not show her dominance of Euro-supremacy; rather, she shows a generous spirit of accepting us as we are into the big tent of Christianity. In turn, we show her our culture and learn, through this mutuality, what a true Christian leader is like.

To "maintain confidentiality" is also an important guideline to follow. It must be

---

<sup>29</sup> The Rt. Rev. Mary D. Glasspool is bishop suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. She delivered the meditation at the annual Renewal of Ordination Vows service on April 15, 2014 at the Cathedral Center of St. Paul, Los Angeles, [http://episcopalnews.ladiocese.org/dfc/newsdetail\\_2/3164984#.U2Ax-6XWMpE](http://episcopalnews.ladiocese.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3164984#.U2Ax-6XWMpE).

clarified beforehand as to what can and cannot be shared. In Asian culture, loyalty to the loved one and family is very important. Thus, a clarification needs to be made to the minority culture not to share others' stories, feelings, or learnings. We need to be clear that these stories and feelings belong to human person, and we do not usually share somebody's belonging without their permission. So not sharing other's belonging is not a betrayal to one's family.

The next guideline, which states that "It's okay to be messy," is somewhat counter cultural to Asians. Being messy may mean disorganization or failure, which may lead some Asians to losing face. So an emphasis needs to be made that "we" are in it together, like cooking or building house – it is messy in the beginning, but "we" will all help to clean it up together. This is not a failure but a process, and when it is done, we will all have something to enjoy together.

The last guideline, "Saying ouch," is a guideline set to interrupt shaming, blaming, or attacking. "Ouch" is an English word that Asians do not use much. It also reflects an aspect that Asians often do not want to express in public, though they may privately. To encourage Asians to say "ouch," Whites need to build a trusting relationship with the Asians to establish a code word or some kind of body language to show they feel that a line has been crossed. Only in this way can "ouch" be safely expressed.

After the VISIONS's guidelines, I will introduce a model of Asset-Based Community Development that helps communities to identify and mobilize the assets of the individual, and to build up the community.

## Asset-Based Community Development

The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model is established by the Asset-Based Community Development Institute from the School of Education and Social Policy of the Northwestern University. The institute states that it,

[I]s at the center of a large and growing movement that considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development. Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions, asset-based community development draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.<sup>30</sup>

In 1993 the guidebook *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, co-written by John Kretzmann and John McKnight, was published. Readers overwhelmingly embraced the book's emphasis on examples of successful local community development and a glass "half-full" rather than "half-empty" perspective. Since then, many foundations, institutions, organizations, local governments, and faith-based communities throughout the country and globally have used these innovative approaches and have built up many transformative communities.

I attended one of the training courses sponsored by the Episcopal Church Diversity Team. I found it to be applicable for local congregation development and for multicultural settings, as well, even though this model is aimed at the building of community in the larger society. The following information is mainly from the training session,<sup>31</sup> and from the work of John P. Kretzman, John L. McKnight, and the Institute. I

---

<sup>30</sup> "Asset-Based Community Development Institute," Northwestern University – School of Education and Social Policy, <http://www.abcdinstitute.org>.

<sup>31</sup> Damon Lynch III, "Asset-Based Community Development" (training presented at the ABCD Training of the Episcopal Church Diversity Team, Prior Lake, Minnesota, December 12-14, 2013).



will first explain the basic ideas of needs and assets, the identification of assets and gifts in the community, and the ways we can do to help each other in multicultural settings.

Kretzman and McKnight saw the necessity of rebuilding troubled communities in the 1990's. Based on "the experience of courageous and creative neighborhood leaders from across the country," they co-wrote the guidebook *Building Communities from the Inside Out* to offer simple, basic, and usable tools.<sup>32</sup> "Courageous" and "creative" leaders are the key to building up community. If things are not working, and we keep doing things that we have always done before because we are afraid of trying on new things, the community will go nowhere. Right now, most mainline Christian denominations are declining; we really need to be courageous and creative to have innovative approaches to transform fear to welcoming in building up community.

The basic idea of this model is that everyone has assets or gifts. It is only whether we acknowledge them or not. With the fear of scarcity, people are prone to see what they do not have and what they need, rather than what they have. When we only worry about what we do not have, we will guard what we have. It is like when we guard the half-full glass of water. If we do not refill it, it will eventually evaporate and we will end up with nothing. But if we use this half glass of water creatively, work together with other people's half-glasses of water, it will expand and overflow. This overflowing image brings us to Psalm 23, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me. You prepare a table before

---

<sup>32</sup> John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, "Introduction" to *Building Communities from the Inside Out: a Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research, 1993), 1-11, <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/abcd/GreenBookIntro.pdf>.

me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (v. 4-5). If we are doing God’s work, what are we afraid of? When we think we do not have enough, we are uncertain, we are afraid, we see darkness, but we can always turn to God and ask for God’s help. With God’s help, anything is possible. “Jesus told the disciples that, ‘For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible’” (Mark 10:27).

This model teaches us to differentiate between needs and assets. I am tabulating it in the following table for a clearer demonstration:<sup>33</sup>

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Assets</b>
Focus on deficits	Focus on assets
Problem response	Opportunity identification
Individual responses	Collective responses
Focus: Individual	Focus: community
Fix people	Develop potential
See people as “clients”	See people as “citizens”
Programs are the answer	People are the answer

This enables us to see that when we emphasize on needs, we are working on the emptiness of people. When we emphasize on the emptiness, we do not see hope. Kretzmann and McKnight states that, “because the needs-based strategy can guarantee only survival, and can never lead to serious change or community development, this

---

<sup>33</sup> Lynch, “Asset-Based Community Development.”

orientation must be regarded as one of the major causes of the sense of hopelessness that pervades discussions about the future. . . if maintenance and survival are the best we can provide, what sense can it make to invest in the future?”<sup>34</sup> Emptiness can only add to emptiness; whereas, if we look at the half-fullness we have, we can expand it, which offers hope.

A lot of people like to explain the word “crisis” with its Chinese meaning. In Chinese “crisis” actually contains two words that mean danger 危 and opportunity 機. If we only see danger and run away, we will miss the opportunity of creating something new. In the situation of Asian immigrant congregations in White Episcopal congregations, if we see the immigrant newcomers as a burden or problem, or as taking things away from the dominant group, only fear is created, and that keeps the group at arms’ length. If this happens, then we will miss finding assets that both groups can offer and utilize to build up community. When we address the dominant group’s fear and anxiety, and help them see something new or different as an opportunity rather than a problem, we can transform this reaction to a new vision for a new community.

In the Hebrew scripture of Exodus, the Lord saw the misery the Israelites suffered in Egypt, and so the Lord called Moses to bring them out of Egypt. Moses became anxious and fearful, and questioned his own authority to go to Pharaoh to carry out this call. The Lord reassured Moses that the Lord would be with him. Moses then questioned, again, his authority to persuade the Israelites, and the Lord showed Moses a few transformations of his staff and hand to reassure him. Moses was still afraid and worried

---

<sup>34</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight, “Introduction,” to *Building Communities*, 3.

about his slow and inarticulate speech – his emptiness. The Lord reassured him, once again, that the Lord would be with him and would send him company to help with his inarticulate speech. (Exod. 3:7-11, 4:1, 2, 10, 14.) Fear and anxiety are normal emotions. As mentioned in Chapter Three, we have emotions because we need them. These emotions help us to become aware of our lives and ourselves. They guide us where and how to take the next step.<sup>35</sup> These scriptures show us that finding an ally is important. Moses had his brother, Aaron, to supplement what he did not have – articulate speech. None of us can do it by ourselves, so we make good use of each other's God-given talents. Because of their ability to work together, we see that Moses and the Israelites became the foundation of the Hebrew history.

It is in connection to each other's community that we can find out the others' talents to supplement what we do not have, and to supplement the others what they do not have. If we focus on what we do not have and are afraid to expose it and to lose face, we will be stuck in the emptiness, and we will eventually dry out with nothing, and will not be able to grow the church – the body of Jesus Christ. As Christians, our goal is not to focus on us but on God, and God's people – the community. It is a collective effort. The ABCD model suggests that everyone has gifts and for ABCD to work, everyone must give gifts – their assets. When we focus on assets, we identify and mobilize the assets of individuals, especially those who are new to the community; then we can build relationships among community members, especially those that are mutually supportive,

---

<sup>35</sup> William M. Kondrath, *Facing Feelings in Faith Communities* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2013), 2.

in this case the immigrant parishioners, and we can give community members more roles and power.

This creative model is not without its drawbacks. When we insist on the assets, we may neglect the real needs of the people. When people are disorientated from the new environment, or marginalized for a long time and are labeled as dependent or as the problem – they internalize the oppression, and they will not know what their assets are. They need some resources to empower them to realize they do have gifts – their assets. Thus, insisting that everyone has assets and neglecting to help the minorities out of the marginalization first will not help the situation. The other problem in the multicultural or multiethnic congregations is that, the minority people are relegated to do manual labor tasks instead of helping with leadership. They are delegated the jobs of cooking, cleaning, and handy-work for the church. They become the handmaidens and the yard keepers of the church. That is not the way to build up the community; rather, it merely exploits immigrants by forcing them to do the manual labor, which is another form of discrimination. In order to build up a trusting relationship and to make good use of our assets, the community has to work together and not just delegate the manual labor to the minority.

In this chapter, I have emphasized the importance of cultural understanding of Asian immigrants, especially their expression of emotions and their need for both explicit and implicit social support. To build up relationship with them, we need to understand, and accept them as they are, and to offer them hope by creating with them a new identity and attachment to God. The root of us being disciples of Jesus Christ is to welcome the

strangers who are different from us, even though we may not be comfortable with it. In order to love them as our neighbors we have to be in dialogue with them so as to know what their gifts are. By identifying their assets, we can help boost their egos, help improve their social status, and get to know them personally. At the same time, we also know what gifts we do and do not have and how we can put our gifts together to overflow the cup of blessings that God has given us. This is not an easy task, but we know it through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. In the conclusion, I will offer recommendations to the Episcopal community on how to put our blessings together to continue to overflow the cup.

## Conclusion

“Know thyself, know others, hundred wars, win them all” is an ancient Chinese war strategy. The idea behind this saying is that if we know the strengths and weaknesses on both sides, we can always win the battle. I am not a pro-war person, nor do I imply that doing ministry is like a war; however, I am borrowing this idea as a reminder of the importance of knowing each other in multicultural congregations and in building up relationship in the community. I would like to borrow this idea to rhythm with the ABCD’s concept and say, “Know Thyself, Know Others, God’s Cups, Fill Them Up.”

In this spiritual journey of serving God’s people and working on this thesis project, I have learned that we, Asians, need to know more about our own internalized oppression and need to have the courage to liberate ourselves from it or to find a partner (or partners) with privileges and power to be our ally. We should not be passive and remain victims. The oppressed Asian minority in the White Episcopal Church needs to come out of the “model minority” bondage and “out of silence,” At the same time, we, Asians need to take responsibility to bring about change. Those who have made it in the “model minority” group need to use their privilege and power to advocate for those who are marginalized. As Eric Law says, we need to live the “Cycle of Gospel Living,” and once we gain our power, we need to give up our own power for those who have less power.

I assert that for the White Episcopal churches that share spaces with the Asian congregation, this is the best opportunity to answer God’s call. These churches need to be

the reconciling agents that offer hope and compassion to the new immigrants, and by working in solidarity with them, form a coalition to fight against oppression in the secular world, rather than being the oppression. We need to forgive and reconcile with our past and with each other and not let what happened before happen again. James H. Cone warns us that reconciliation has to be done by both sides; it cannot be achieved by the oppressed side alone, especially if the White oppressors are not ready to loose the chains of oppression.<sup>1</sup> Cone further states that “reconciliation is not simply freedom from oppression and slavery; it is also freedom for God.”<sup>2</sup> When the Whites act as the reconciling agent, they should help the new immigrants find their hope and new identity in God. To do so, we need to build up intercultural ministry. We need to be mutually welcoming and understanding, and intentionality is the key. By understanding each other, we are able to build up a trusting relationship and see the goodness in each other and, thus, know each other’s gifts. We then put our gifts together to expand the goodness to overflowing. This is not an easy task, and it absolutely takes time. The participants have to be intentional and faithful at all levels: the personal, congregational, diocesan, and the national level. If not, when hurdles come along, we will succumb to fear and retreat, and so turn a blind eye to injustice, even to the point of becoming the ones who oppress and exclude.

Let me share the establishment of Li Tim-Oi Center, a Chinese Ministry Center of the Episcopal Church, which is a result of the gifts offered at all levels, personal, congregational, diocesan, and national level, with intentionality.

---

<sup>1</sup> James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 219.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.



In the diocese where the Chinese Center is established, there is an increasing population of immigrants from Mainland China. There are two Chinese priests, one from China who is also working a secular job and has the vision of starting an Episcopal Chinese Center to help immigrants, but he is without resources. The other priest has started a small Chinese congregation that is attached to a White church. They both presented the idea for the Chinese Center to the diocesan bishop, but there was no resource at that time. Later, a new bishop suffragan was elected and assigned to oversee the multicultural ministry. Again, the two priests presented the idea to her. She is a big advocate of multicultural ministry. She liked the idea and worked tirelessly to look for funding. In the meantime, the second priest also presented this idea to her White rector who has extensive experience in Hispanic ministry and knows multicultural ministry well. He is aware of the demographic change in the area. There was fear of scarcity and change when the second priest was called to start the Chinese ministry, and she ran into much resistance, initially. But she has served both language congregations faithfully during some hard times and has built up relationships with them. Since this church has ample space, the White rector presented the idea to the vestry to expand Chinese ministry. The second priest offered cross-cultural forums, the ABCD models to the White congregation, and presented the Radical Welcoming idea by Stephanie Spellers to vestry members who were willing to be in the discussion. The vestry and most of the parishioners bought into the idea and eventually supported the idea of expansion. Finally, the bishop suffragan found some funding from the Episcopal Church Center. This church recruited the first Chinese priest to start the center. In addition to the support from this

church, both the diocese and the Episcopal Center partially fund this ministry. This center has demonstrated well the utilization of different assets for building up an ethnic ministry in a White church. The asset of the two priests is their cultural knowledge to serve the Chinese population; the asset of the White rector is his White rector's power, and his ability to emphasize the necessity of ministering to the neighborhood through his preaching and vestry meetings. The assets of the congregation are the space and skills of the parishioners, and their more affluent resources. The asset of the bishop is her episcopal network to find resources, and last but not least is the resource of the Episcopal Church. When all these assets were put together, the Chinese Center was established.

At the time of writing this thesis, the Chinese-language congregation is growing because new members see the genuine welcoming of the White congregation and Chinese parishioners, and they see the presence of God in this church. They invite their friends to join. Knowing that everybody has gifts and should share, the center has started Chinese-language Lay Leadership Training Course to empower the laity. Many of the new members have participated in serving the church. The bilingual parishioners serve both language congregations. The White congregation sees the growth and energy of the new and younger congregation, and they feel energized instead of feeling threatened. They offer to converse with the Chinese after Sunday service to help with their English, and they ask the Chinese to teach them language and cultural lessons. The Whites also elected two Chinese members to be in the vestry so there is shared power, especially when it comes to making decisions for the Chinese-language congregations.

This process has taken a few years and much education and relationship building to get the parish to support the new congregation. The support from the White parishioners is from the grassroots up, and not top down from the bishop or the rector. It has become the parishioner's ministry, and they own it. There has been increasing and genuine interaction between the two congregations. There is still a long way to becoming one family, but it is headed in that direction. We can now see the transformation from fear to joy and welcoming. This example gives us hope and inspiration to do more intercultural ministry. The vision of this center is to address the multicultural needs and to be a state-of-the-art resource for Chinese Ministry in the Episcopal Church, promoting evangelism, theological education, lay leadership, and multiple ministry resources. The sharing of their assets is seen not only locally in the individual church but also on the diocesan and national church level, and, eventually, to be seen globally. This model is working to build up a sustainable community by creatively utilizing resources to become God's reconciling partner in bringing about God's Kingdom.

"In a day of fear and mistrust the multiethnic church is a sample of recomposition in Christ. *E pluribus unum* is a visionary slogan in politics; in the multiethnic church it is a response of the Holy Spirit to culture wars."<sup>3</sup> Harvie M. Conn wrote the Foreword to *One New People* by Manuel Ortiz. What a good reminder that doing ministry in multicultural settings and welcoming other ethnic groups among us is a return to what Jesus has taught us to do. As mentioned in Chapter Three, this is what Jesus commanded us: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the

---

<sup>3</sup> Harvie M. Conn, "Forward" in *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* by Manuel Ortiz (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 11.

Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31.) And it is counter-cultural, indeed. However, to do so is our call to be God’s reconciliatory agent to the world, sustained by the Holy Spirit, and in fulfillment of our baptismal covenant.

I hope this project offers some insights to Asians so they may recognize their own internalized oppression, so as to become empowered and liberated from their personal cultural baggage. I also hope this project will help both sides learn what their challenges and blessings are. Instead of being fearful of their half-empty cups, it is my hope they will make good use of their half-full cups, fill them both up, and make them both overflow with Christ’s peace and joy.

I will share this prayer to conclude this project:

May God bless you with discomfort, at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears, to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in the world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

A Franciscan Blessing with unknown origin

I am thankful for this four-fold Franciscan Blessing of discomfort, anger, tears and foolishness. It gives me strength, inspiration, and hope to do what God has called me to do. I would like to invite my brothers and sisters in Christ, Whites and Asians, to walk together and act as reconciling agents to carry out God's dream of justice, compassion, and reconciliation and to transform all our half-emptinesses into complete overflowing fullnesses.

## Bibliography

- “Asset-Based Community Development Institute,” Northwestern University – School of Education and Social Policy. <http://www.abcdinstitute.org>.
- Akiyama, Cliff. “Bridging the Gap Between Two Cultures: An Analysis on Identity Attitudes and Attachment of Asian Americans.” *Brief Treatment Crisis Intervention* 8, no. 3 (2008): 251-63.  
<http://btci.edina.clockss.org/cgi/content/abstract/8/3/251>.
- Alexandra, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press, 2012.
- Cantle, Ted. *About Interculturalism*. Nottingham, UK: Institute of Community Cohesion, 2012. <http://tedcantle.co.uk/resources-and-publications/about-interculturalism/>.
- Carroll R., M. Daniel. *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Chan, Sucheng. *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.
- Chen, Carolyn. *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Cote, James E., and Charles G. Levine. *Identity, Formation, Agency, and Culture: A Social Psychological Synthesis*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002.
- Danner, David L. “Immigration and the Episcopal Church: An Ever-Changing Face.” *Anglican Theological Review* 95, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 649-71.
- Edwards, James R. “A Biblical Perspective on Immigration Policy.” In *Debating Immigration*, edited by Carol M. Swain, 46-62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Eoyang, Thomas Jr. “Re-Mapping the Margins: Theological Reflections on Chinese American Experiences in the Episcopal Church.” DMin Thesis, Episcopal Divinity School, 2014.
- Episcopal Church of the United States. *The Book of Common Prayer*. New York: Church Publishing, 1979.

- Glasspool, Mary D. "Cultural Humility." Sermon delivered at the annual Renewal of Ordination Vows service, Echo Park, CA, April 15, 2014.  
[http://episcopalnews.ladiocese.org/dfc/newsdetail\\_2/3164984#.U2Ax-6XWMpE](http://episcopalnews.ladiocese.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3164984#.U2Ax-6XWMpE).
- Hamby, Alonzo L. "Outline of U.S. History." November 20, 2010.  
<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2011/04/20110428150452su0.6368306.html#axzz3S1P5stTB>
- Hirschmann, Charles. "The Role of Religion in the Origins and Adaptation of Immigrant Groups in the United States." In *Rethinking Migration: New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. Edited by Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind, 391-415. New York: Berghahn Books, 2008.
- Hooper, Kate, and Jeanne Batalove. *Chinese Immigrants in the United States*. Migration Policy Institute, January 28, 2015.  
<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states>.
- Kanyoro, Musimbi R.A. "Cultural Hermeneutics: An African Contribution." In *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible*. Edited by Musa W. Dube, 101-13. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2001.
- Kelley, Melissa M. *Grief: Contemporary Theory and the Practice of Ministry*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Kondrath, William M. *Facing Feelings in Faith Communities*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *God's Tapestry. Understanding and Celebrating Differences*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008.
- Kwok, Pui-lan. "The Legacy of Cultural Hegemony in the Anglican Church." In *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism: The Anglican Communion in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-lan, 47-70. New York: Church Publishing, 2001.
- Kretzmann, John P., and John L. McKnight. "Introduction" to *Building Communities from the Inside Out: a Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research, 1993.  
<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/abcd/GreenBookIntro.pdf>.
- Law, Eric H. F. "Cycle of Gospel Living." In *Kaleidoscope Institute: For Competent Leadership in a Diverse, Changing World, Modules 3 to 7*. Los Angeles, CA: Kaleidoscope Institute, 2009.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993.
- Lee, Ting-Yin. "The Loss and Grief in Immigration: Pastoral Care for Immigrants." *Pastoral Psychology* 59, no. 2 (2010): 159-69.
- Matsuoka, Fumitaka. *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches*. Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Color of Faith. Building Community In A Multiracial Society*. Cleveland: OH: United Church Press, 1995.
- McCabe, Kristen. *Chinese Immigrants in the United States*. Migration Policy Institute, January 18, 2012. <http://migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states#1>.
- McCaughan, Pat. "Winston Ching, First Asiamerica Missioner, Remembered." Episcopal News Service, July 5, 2012. <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2012/07/05/winston-ching-first-asiamerica-missioner-remembered/>.
- McFayden, Kenneth J. *Strategic Leadership for a Change: Facing Our Losses, Finding Our Future*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2009.
- Nittle, Nadra Kareem. "Ending Racial Segregation in the American Church by Promoting Diversity," About News, <http://racereactions.about.com/od/diversitymatters/a/RacialSegregationinChurch.htm>.
- Paya Herrero, Begona. "Voice and Identity: a Contrastive Study of Identity Perception in Voice." PhD dissertation, LMU München: Fakultät für Sprach-und Literaturwissenschaften, 2009.
- Pearson, Dairine M., Heejung S. Kim, and David K. Sherman. "Diversity Issues in Thanatology: Culture, Social Support, and Coping With Bereavement for Asians and Asian Americans." *The Forum* 35, no. 2 (April 2009): 7-8. <http://people.psych.ucsb.edu/sherman/david/pearsonkimsherman2009.pdf>.
- Pew Research Center. *The Global Divide on Homosexuality: Greater Acceptance in More Secular and Affluent Countries*, updated May 27, 2014. <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/05/Pew-Global-Attitudes-Homosexuality-Report-REVISED-MAY-27-2014.pdf>.



Pew Research Center. *The Rise of Asian Americans*, updated edition April 4, 2013.  
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2013/04/Asian-Americans-new-full-report-04-2013.pdf>.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life. *Asian Americans: A Mosaic of Faiths*, July 19, 2012.  
<http://www.pewforum.org/files/2012/07/Asian-Americans-religion-full-report.pdf>.

Spellers, Stephanie. *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other and the Spirit of Transformation*. New York: Church Publishing, 2006.

Takaki, Ronald T. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1993.

Vergara, Fred (Winfred). *Mainstreaming: Asian Americans in the Episcopal Church*. New York: Office of Asian American Ministries, the Episcopal Church Center, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. *No Longer Marginalized: The Episcopal Asian American Ministry in the 21st Century*.  
[http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/asiamerica\\_final\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/asiamerica_final_pamphlet.pdf).

"What Is Culture?" University of Minnesota – Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, last modified May 27, 2014.  
<http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/definitions.html>.

VISIONS, Inc. "Who We Are. Vision Statement." VISIONS, Inc. <http://visions-inc.org/who-we-are/>

Yee, Gale A. "She Stood in Tears Amid the Alien Corn." In *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian North American Women's Religion and Theology*. Edited by Rita Nakashima Brock, Jung Ha Kim, Kwok Pui-lan and Seung Ai Yang, 45-65. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.